# Luke's use of the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31) to Construct New Social Identities

by
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## Declaration

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# i. Acknowledgements

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# ii. Abstract

This thesis explores Luke's use of the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31) to create new social identities. The thesis discusses the socio-economic background to Luke's day, discussing how one's ascribed and acquired honour contributed to one's social identity, as well as how one's social identity and standing was affected by wealth and how it was used. The thesis goes on to use parallel parables to justify the use of the lens of social identity in such parables. Finally, the thesis goes on in chapters five and six to discuss the important social identity markers to which the parable refers: Moses and the prophets (chapter five) and the figure of Abraham (chapter six). The researcher shows how Luke uses these characters to create new social identities. By acting like those opposed to God's people, Luke shows that the Rich Man and others like him act according to social identities of those opposed to God's people (those in line with Moses and the Prophets and specifically Abraham), and so can no longer claim such a social identity or the group entitlements granted to one who holds such an identity. Those considered to have low-status social identities were actually the ones with a high-status social identity: "children of Abraham" – the very identity that the Rich Man believed that he held by virtue of his ascribed honour as a physical Israelite; put simply, there is a reversal of social identities.

# Chapter One - Introduction and Survey

## 1.1. Introduction

The researcher has chosen to write a thesis analysing the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31). More specifically, this thesis will aim to learn what Luke is attempting to teach us about social identity and social relationships in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (from here, the parable will be referred to as "Lazarus and the Rich Man"). The researcher believes that this parable is far richer than a text meant to teach details about the afterlife (see, for instance, Bauckham 1998a; Brawley 2020:155-156; Lehtipuu 2007). The author of Luke's Gospel intended to make a social commentary in which situations as the hearers knew them would be reversed. As is the case in several of the parables, the ones expected to be members of God's Kingdom turned out not to be and those not expected to be members would be granted entrance. The outcasts would be shown to be the true members.

The question asked by the researcher is: "What can we learn about Luke's understanding of the social identities of the characters in the parable?". Each person in the parable held a position in society that would have been recognised by other members of their society. The researcher seeks to understand what these identities are in terms of society of Luke's day and to understand properly the commentary Luke is attempting to make on what were seen as accepted social identities. In this thesis, the researcher will deal with questions regarding the identity of Luke's audience and ask questions regarding how the reversal story applied to people from different groups to whom Luke was writing.

In this chapter, the researcher will outline nature of this thesis, giving some preliminary information and then giving a summary of the contents of each chapter. Firstly, the chapter will give a note on terminology. Secondly, the researcher will give an overview of the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, then a description of social identity and then a summary of the contents of each chapter. This chapter is designed mainly to give some preliminary notes, describe social identity and related concepts that will be used in analysing the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, and outline the contents of the rest of the thesis.

### 1.1.1. Problem Statement

The problem statement of the thesis is as follows: Social identities do not always play out in the real world in the same way that they should theoretically play out. How does Luke plot the way that social identities are not playing out the way they should and then plot the way they should be playing

out? What does Luke think should be one's terminal identity? Also, how does Luke show a reversal of social identities in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man?

As will be stated in more detail later in this thesis, people tend to have multiple social identities; however, they have one that they consider to be the most important one, and this is known as their terminal identity. Luke's parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man raises the question of what the characters in the parable consider to be their terminal identity, both in theory and in practice. Was their identity as "Israelite" or "child of Abraham" their most important identity? Did the theory and practice differ? If they differed, how did Luke propose that things should change practically? These are some of the questions that this thesis intends to answer.

## 1.2. Notes on terminology

When referring to the author of the Gospel of Luke, the researcher will simply use the name "Luke". The researcher is aware that the traditional authorship of the Gospels is doubted by a significant number of scholars. The researcher has no intention to claim that the traditional authorship is accurate; rather, the traditional name will be used as a shorthand for "the author of the Gospel of Luke".

The researcher will be referring on occasion to relations between "Jews" and "Gentiles". The word "gentiles" is used in this thesis purely to designate people who live outside of the borders of Israel and have no connection to the land of Israel, or are not ethnically descended from an Israelite line.

When the researcher refers to someone as being a "Jew" or Jewish, the researcher intends to communicate that the person or group to whom he is referring is from Palestine, has a connection to Palestine, or follows a religion that can be considered part of Ancient Judaism. There were several different forms of "Judaism" in antiquity, and it has been argued that we should refer to such religion as "Judaisms" rather than "Judaism". When one is analysing religion from Ancient Palestine or differentiating between different Jewish sects or "denominations", this is a wise course of action. In this thesis, however, the researcher is using the term in a broader sense. The term is merely used to describe a person who belongs to one of the groups classified under "Judaisms" (see for instance Cohen 2006).

When analysing the situation on the ground, the researcher will focus on general patterns in the ancient Roman Empire and Palestine as a whole. The researcher will for the most part refer to social patterns as patterns found in "Luke's day". The researcher will talk about the patterns that are portrayed in Luke's Gospel to see how the Jesus presented by Luke speaks against what would be considered "normal" social patterns.

## 1.3. Overview of the parable

### 1.3.1. Translation of the parable

[19]There was once a rich man who wore fine purple linen and feasted joyously every day. [20] There was also an outcast named Lazarus, who was dragged daily and cast down at the rich man's gate; [21] he longed to feed on the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs came and licked his wounds. [22] The two men died: Lazarus the outcast was carried by angels to Abraham's Bosom, while the rich man, after his burial, [23] descended to Hades, where he experienced great torment. [24] He cried out to Abraham, "Father Abraham, I beg you for mercy! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for these flames are tormenting me!" [25] But Abraham replied, "My child, remember how you enjoyed your life while Lazarus lived in squalor? Well, he is now being comforted while you live in torment. [26] In any case, between us and you is a wide chasm: those who wish to cross from our location to yours cannot do so, and neither can those who wish to cross from you to us." [27] The rich man replied, "In that case, Father, I ask you to send him to my Father's house, [28] for I have five brothers, and I wish for them to be warned lest they come to this place of torment." [29] Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them listen to them." [30] The rich man said, "No, father Abraham. If one goes to them from the dead, they will surely repent!" [31] But Abraham replied, "If they will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not listen to one who rises from the dead." (Luke 16:19-31, researcher's translation).

### 1.3.2. Reason for choosing this parable

The researcher has chosen to write a literary analysis of this parable to discover how Luke plots social identity in the parable. The researcher has chosen to focus on aspects of the parable that describe the differences in social status between the Rich Man and Lazarus. The researcher will give a social background to the world in which the story told in the parable is situated, look at some parallel parables, and apply these by commenting on what Luke is trying to teach by writing this parable.

The researcher will examine literary parallels and how they used social identity (chapter three). The researcher will then examine the Law and the Prophets and Abraham, discussing their use in the parable as social identity markers through ascribed honour. Chapter Two will show how honour and shame played out among people of differing and similar statuses and will then apply these concepts to Lazarus and the Rich Man. Given the significance of Moses and the prophets and Abraham in the parable and in ancient Jewish thought, the researcher has decided to allocate an entire chapter to Moses

and the Prophets (chapter four) and to the character of Abraham (chapter five).

## 1.4. Social Identity Theory

### 1.4.1. Description of Social Identity Theory

For a general understanding of Social Identity Theory (SIT), the researcher is indebted to Aaron Kuecker (2011). In his work, *The Spirit and the other: Social identity, ethnicity and intergroup reconciliation in Luke-Acts*, Kuecker describes SIT and applies it to Luke-Acts as a whole, making the general argument that when the Holy Spirit is mentioned by Luke, the text talks about reconciliation between Jew and Gentile in some way. In other words, Luke makes reference to the Spirit in order to show that the division between Jew and Gentile should no longer exist (see also Baker 2011).

The researcher is of the view that the concepts discussed by Kuecker (2011) can be applied to specific instances and has chosen to use the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man as an example. This passage contains many allusions that are markers of social identity, and understanding these will lead to less misinterpretation of this passage (the researcher is, however, careful not to assume that he is right while all others are wrong) (see, for instance, Brawley 2020:155-157). SIT also allows us to read the passage through the collectivist lens with which Luke was familiar rather than an individualist lens (see also Esler 2003:20-21).

SIT essentially refers to the way that people understand themselves and their group in relation to others. It focusses on the way people understand themselves to be part of a group rather than as individuals. It looks at the group they fit into, which level they are at in the group's hierarchy, and how their group fairs against other groups in society's social hierarchy (Brawley 2020:11-12). Such beliefs are seen as necessary because they are believed to put things into order; they allow social interaction to happen by dictating the terms of social interactions based on which group one fits into (Flanders and Peterson 2002:451, 455). In Luke's day, people were known as a member of their group rather than individuals, so this is a good place to start when interpreting New Testament passages (Esler 2003:20-21; Malina and Neyrey 1996).

Social identities form when we categorise people based on the groups to which they belong (we tend to assume that the people of a specific group have similar traits) (Hart and van Vugt 2004:587; Kuecker 2011:62). When two or more individuals perceive themselves as having similar traits, they perceive themselves to be similar and form a common identity based on these traits (Kuecker 2011:28). When two or more people have formed a group based on shared traits, they form a common group identity (a process known as *identification*) (Esler 2003:27-28; Kuecker 2011:28). Identifying with other people, usually while differentiating oneself from other groups, helps people to know where they

belong in their social order; there is no need to live in uncertainty (Flanders and Peterson 2002:451; Hart and Van Vugt 2004:594-595; Kuecker 2011:28).

As a result of people coming together on the basis of shared identity, the members of the group experience in-group love or in-group bias. Based on relevant criteria (usually one advantageous to the group), the group evaluates itself against other groups to understand its place in the social hierarchy (Kuecker 2011:28). It is important to note that there is little out-group hate. Rather, the group views itself favourably, and the interests of the group are seen to be more important than the needs of other groups, so conflict between two groups over what is advantageous to one can occur as a result (Kuecker 2011:30).

Kuecker (2011:31) notes four ways in which in-group bias is intensified: status stability, impermeable group barriers, status illegitimacy, and external threat. In a society with high status stability, the classes are largely static, and it is difficult to improve one's standing. Impermeable group boundaries limit a group member's ability to join a different group. This can come from a direct order of the higher group, wishing to preserve its purity, or not seeing someone from a lower class as worthy of the group. It can also come as a result of the group with lower status not wishing for someone from their own group to improve their position by joining a higher-status group. Status illegitimacy refers to a situation in which one group, usually a lower-status group, seeing a different group (usually a higher-status group) as not being legitimately allowed to occupy the status they occupy (in a first-century Jewish context, this could apply to Jewish groups viewing Roman governing status as illegitimate as they were ruling over people who should be directly under the rule of YHWH (see for instance Wright 1992:302)). External threat is when a group believes their identity to be under threat from external influences. A higher-status group may see people from lower-status groups joining and thus ruining the "purity" of the higher-status group. It can also refer to a lower-status group being deprived of their distinct identity by forced assimilation.

The social hierarchy also determines which groups have access to better resources (with higher-status groups having more control and therefore receiving more) (Kuecker 2011:28). In a time when the world's goods seemed limited, this would have a great impact. One group should be careful to avoid taking more than what is perceived as its share lest a higher-status group takes action against the lower-status group. Naturally, one would want to join a group with as high a status as possible, as this would lead to the individual having more resources. For example, one may want to join the governing class because this class has more control. Such people governed other classes as they believed they were designated by the gods to do so (as far as people in antiquity were concerned). Having such responsibilities entitled them to more resources and power, so people relished having such a status.

A potential complicating factor when studying social identity is the fact that people always have multiple social identities (known as *dual* or *nested* identities) (Reid 2004). What this means is that a person belongs to multiple social groups. In Jesus' day, this could manifest in being for instance part of the group "Pharisee" or "Sadducee" while also having the identity "Israelite". Conflict (not necessarily violent) could then ensue over which group best embodied the value of the terminal identity (in this case "Israelite") (Baker 2011:229; Kuecker 2011: 28-29). In this thesis, the researcher will examine the categories that are necessary when discussing social identity with reference to Lazarus and the Rich Man.

A motivating factor for understanding one's social identity is the feeling of belonging in a group. Häusser et. al. (2009) found that the feeling of belonging was beneficial as it helped to produce a positive response to stress. Simply put, the feeling of belonging to a group helps one to deal with stress. More specifically, they found that people had better responses to stress when they were around people with whom they felt a shared social identity (Häusser 2009:973). The people around them had to be people with whom they felt a shared identity; if the people around them did not share their social identity, they found that being around these people did not help to reduce stress levels and their rpesence could even lead to increased stress levels (Häusser 2009:973). In short, knowledge of one's social identity helps one to know which people will help one to reduce one's stress levels. Also, knowledge of one's social identity and association with people of a shared identity gives people a feeling of belonging that is beneficial to or even necessary for one's mental health.

### 1.4.2. Collectivism, individualism and social identity

The question arises regarding the nature of social identity: is it a largely individual or collectivistic concept? While in a modern context the term can be applied individually, it can also be applied in an ancient Mediterranean collectivistic context. According to Reid (2004:318-319), people in a collective context are more likely to associate with group norms when they feel that they belong to the group. This, according to Reid (2004), arises from the fact that the individuals within groups with which they feel strong affinity believe that their group has a shared common fate. When we apply this on a societal level, it follows that there is a belief that people should keep within their social groups to uphold order in society (see also Flanders and Peterson 2002:451, 455).

One's social identity was based largely on one's honour status, and this determined the groups to which a person belonged in society. For instance, one could be born into a high-status group, giving one a high amount of honour and a social identity that brought with it a high standing in society. The researcher will discuss this more fully in chapter two.

Here it should be mentioned that a fusion can occur between one's perceived social identity and one's perceived individual identity. In an experiment in which they attempted to study the motivations of extremists, Swann et.al. (2009) found that members of a group are more inclined to engage in extreme acts for a group when they feel that their own identity is fused to the identity of the group. They argue that in becoming a member of a social group, people go through a process of depersonalisation, in which they lose their personal identity and view themselves as merely a member of the group that can be exchanged with another member of the group (Swann et.al. 2009:996). In other words, because their identity is based mainly on their group identity, another member of the group would theoretically have identical characteristics and therefore be inter-changeable with other members who have undergone a high amount of identity fusion.

In the previous section, we discussed the concept of in-group bias and the resulting bias against people who are not members of the group. It is worth noting that members of the group who have become fused tend to engage in higher amounts of in-group bias and would therefore be more willing to take extreme acts, even acts of self-sacrifice or extremism, on behalf of the group (Swann et.al. 2009:996). It should be noted that fused members do not rid themselves of their personal identity in favour of the group identity; rather, a fused member's personal identity becomes fused with the group identity in such a way that there is little to no difference between these two identities.

Such thinking is similar to Ancient Mediterranean thinking (as will be discussed in chapter two). Essentially, one was seen more as a representative of the group in which they belonged rather than as an individual person. One was not thought of as one's own individual personality but as a representative of the group. For instance, if one was Roman, one would be seen more as a representative of what it means to be Roman than as an individual person who happens to be of Roman descent. The categories into which people of Luke's day placed people will be discussed in chapter two.

To the researcher's mind, this shows that the concept of social identity can be understood at a collective level as well as an individual level. Social identity describes both the individual and the group to which an individual belongs.

### 1.4.3. Status Illegitimacy

A final important concept for discussion in this chapter is the concept of "status illegitimacy". Simply put, one may have a social identity that is viewed as illegitimate by others. One may be in a position which others view as illegitimate because they view the holder of the position as one who does not really have a right to occupy the position that one occupies.

An example of this is a colonial power. The people of a subject state tend to view the rule of the

colonial power as illlegitimate because the colonial people are not seen as their people. The people of the colonised land tend to view themselves as being a group of people who have a shared history, language, and/or culture, and this brings them together. However, the colonial rulers do not share the same social identity. In the eyes of the colonised people, the colonial rulers do not have a shared history, language, and/or culture as the people in the colonised nation; they therefore do not share their social identity.

In this example, the people under the colonial rule of a foreign power believe that those who occupy positions of leadership should have the same social identity as them (at least on a national level). They tend to believe that the colonial rulers rule because something has gone wrong. In short, the subject nation views the colonial ruler as having status illegitimacy because they are not seen as part of the group and therefore do not have the same in-group benefits, in this case the right to rule the subject nation. They occupy their status illegitimately, hence the term "status illegitimacy". Reactions to status illegitimacy differ from group to group, depending on factors both related and unrelated to social identity.

The colonial power, of course, views itself as the legitimate ruler despite not having a shared social identity. From a perspective of social identity, they hold the belief that their in-group benefits include the right to rule other nations (the reasons for which the colonial ruler thought it proper would differ from group to group). The subject nation would view their reasoning for having a right to such a position as illegitimate.

The important take-away here is that social identities are not always seen as legitmate (colonial rulers are just one example of groups who are seen as having status illegitimacy). The status which one group holds could easily be viewed by another group as illegitimate for reasons which would differ from group to group.

### 1.4.4. Categories for Lazarus and the Rich Man

As far as relevant social categories go, the distinction which appears to have the highest relevance in Ancient Palestine would be Jew and Gentile (see for instance Sanders 1977:85-90; Wright 1992:230-232). The researcher will argue that, to a small extent, this distinction does have relevance for our understanding of this passage. The Rich Man thinks that he is part of the Kingdom because of his Jewish ethnicity, and that he will be surprised when he finds that the other is actually sitting at Abraham's bosom while he himself is in torment. However, since both characters are Jewish, this parable does not have a major impact on contemporary understandings of social identity.

The second major categories presented in Lazarus and the Rich Man are the ones which one usually thinks of when looking at this parable: rich and poor. These terms, however, were not just economic in nature. The researcher will investigate how these identities were understood in Luke's day and use the results to determine how they would be understood by Luke's readers. What the researcher learns here will be used to analyse Lazarus and the Rich man. Another important identity marker to be mentioned here is that of being a member of a village versus being an outsider, a common form of in-group bias of Luke's day.

## 1.5. Literary Angle

This parable will be analysed from a largely literary angle. However, elements of sociology and psychology will be brought in. The researcher will discuss social identity first and then describe social categories into which people were divided in Luke's day (the latter will require a brief delving into sociology). Then the researcher will then use a literary method to see how Luke plots social identities that were accepted in his day in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man.

When analysing from a literary angle, the researcher will make use of characterisation. Simply put, this element is used to show characters in a certain light. A character in the parable is intended to portray fictional characters to whom real people can relate, perhaps making them think through what Luke is attempting to teach through the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. For instance, Luke characterises Jesus' opponents in Lazarus and the Rich Man in such a way that others who oppose Jesus could relate to the Rich Man in the parable.

Use will also be made of *pathos*, although not to the extent that characterisation is used. *Pathos* is a literary device used to make an emotional impact on the reader. The story-teller intends to cause a specific emotion in the reader which causes the reader to think about the message that the author intends to communicate. Furthermore, the emotional impact of the story would force a reader to consider the implications of the story. For example, in Lazarus and the Rich Man, a reader would be shocked to see Abraham refusing an act of hospitality. The reader would wonder what would cause Abraham to act in such a way, and this in turn would lead the reader to self-examination. Characterisation, however, will take up more space than *pathos*.

The main reason that such elements would be used is that the reader would most likely not consider the points if they were presented in a direct, straight-forward manner. If presented in such a way, it could easily come across as a challenge that the reader would have to win against the author, with the resulting defensiveness ultimately not effecting any real change. Literary elements allow the message to be delievered in a more subtle way that does not at first appear to be a challenge. Over time,

as the reader considers the story, the lesson(s) that the author intends to teach will lodge themselves in the reader's mind, causing the reader to re-examine their world view. After re-examination, the reader will either accept or reject the message the author intends to communicate. This process leads to the author convincing more people of the truth of their message than would be convinced if the author had a used a direct and straight-forward manner of communication.

According to Coulter and Smith (2009:577-578), narratives contribute to learning as they help us to question existing world views with renewed interest and curiosity. People tend to understand the world in terms of stories, and telling a new story causes us to think about the elements in the story and how they apply to us specifically (see also McGrath 2015:44-45). Telling a story is therefore a more effective method in causing us to rethink our world views than direct confrontation, especially if the story is one that seems like it could be theoretically possible.

In summary, the researcher will make reference to psychology for the concept of social identity, sociology to understand the accepted social categories of Luke's day, and literary analysis to see how Luke presents accepted social categories, critiques them, and ultimately constructs a new social identity from the old categories. The main literary element that the researcher will use is characterisation, an analysis of how characters are presented. Use will also be made of *pathos* as the researcher will briefly discuss the emotional impact of the parable in terms of social identity.

## 1.6. Survey of the contents of this thesis

In keeping with the above introduction, here follows a survey which will describe briefly the different chapters in this thesis. The researcher will lay out the contents of what will be discussed in each chapter. The chapters will discuss the following topics: socio-economic statuses in Luke's World (background information), parallel parables, the Law and the Pophets and their relationship to Lazarus and the Rich Man, and the relationship between Abraham and Lazarus and the Rich Man. The final chapter will provide a summary and tie up loose ends.

### 1.6.1. Socio-economic statuses in Luke's world

Chapter Two will discuss socio-economic perceptions in Luke's day. Since economic perceptions were different in the ancient world, it is worth discussing this aspect in the thesis. Of primary importance when discussing Lazarus and the rich man is that one's personal financial situation was not the most important indicator of a person's social worth. In fact, it could even be detrimental, as the accumulation of wealth could be seen as taking away from others (deSilva 2000:112-113). In this

thesis, the researcher will be discussing how values of honour and shame are connected to wealth, and how this creates one's social identity.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss how the concepts discussed here are applicable to social identity and the way in which one's social identity was based on these concepts.

### 1.6.2. Parallel parables

In chapter Three, the researcher will discuss other examples of similar parables from antiquity. The form of this story was popularly used in folktales from Egypt to Greece. It would be presumptuous to assume that in all cases in all areas they were always expected to teach exactly the same message. However, if we can discuss some parallels and the general messages behind them, we can get a general idea of what these parables were intended to teach. This chapter must of necessity be kept brief as these parallels do not form part of the main body of the argument. However, the researcher thinks that it is necessary to include them in order to prevent reading them from a strictly "modern Christian" point of view, in which it is asked only what the individual must do to "get saved".

Lucian of Samosata's *Journey to the Lower World* is one such parallel. Here, Lucian contrasts Megapenthes and Micyllus (Lucian Cataplus 24-28). As a Cynic, Lucian attempts to show that the endless pursuit of wealth is ultimately worthless: Megapenthes, the wealthy man, ends up in chains whereas Micyllus, the poor cobbler, is allowed to have a blissful afterlife. The social aspects of wealth and ostentatiousness will also be discussed here in relation to Megapenthes.

A significant Egyptian parallel is the story of Setme and his son, Si-Osiris. In this story, Setme sees a rich man having a glorious burial and wishes to have such wealth and such a burial himself (Genz 2015:227-228). Si-Osiris, however, takes his father to Amente, the land of the dead, in which he sees that a rich man, who is being buried at that moment, is experiencing torment in the afterlifewhile a poor man is experiencing bliss because his good deeds exceeded his bad deeds (Genz 2015:227). We see here a view according to which the pursuit of wealth leads to one performing more bad deeds than good deeds. Interestingly enough, here we have an example of someone who is allowed back into the world of the living.

There is also a Rabbinic parallel in which a rich tax collector (Bar Mayan) and a poor Rabbinic scholar die at the same time (Papaioannou 2013:116-117). Bar Mayan has a splendid burial, and the poor scholar dies undignified; and the justice of God is questioned on these grounds in this parable (Papaioannou 2013:116-117). The poor scholar had sinned very little, whereas the rich tax collector had committed many sins, and the scholar's sins were atoned for by his undignified death (Papaioannou 2013:116-117).

Other texts have been suggested as parallels, but the researcher has chosen to focus only on these three. Space dictates that the researcher must limit the number of parallels that can be discussed. These three appear to be closely linked to the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. They all include depictions of the afterlife and cover a geographically wide area of such folk tales. Due to the geographical wideness of the stories chosen, the researcher thinks that they can be used to establish somewhat normative patterns for the way these stories were used and for the essential message that these stories were used to communicate.

There are several elements that one could choose to discuss when discussing parallels, but the researcher has chosen to focus on elements necessary when discussing social identity; otherwise, this chapter would require an entire study on its own. This chapter will help us to understand ways in which social identity was discussed in such stories, and applying this to Lazarus and the Rich Man will help us to understand the parable.

### 1.6.3. Moses and the Prophets

In Chapter Four, the researcher will discuss the significance of "Moses and the Prophets" in Lazarus and the Rich Man. Jesus talks about the fact that if one does not listen to "Moses and the Prophets", one will also not listen to Jesus' words (Luke 16:28-31). What we see from this is that Luke does not regard Jesus as doing away entirely with the Law and the Prophets. He appears to be saying that, if one follows Jesus, one is participating in what the Law and the Prophets predicted will come to pass. It will therefore be pertinent to investigate how Luke's understanding of the Law and the Prophets in order to see what Jesus does in his Gospel when he equates his followers to those who are the true representatives of Israel.

The researcher will examine one how one story, the story that deals with King Ahab and Naboth's vineyard, deals with wealth and social identity. In the story, King Ahab, inspired by Queen Jezebel, uses his high-ranking social identity to take away land from Naboth, and then the researcher will apply this story to Lazarus and the Rich Man.

The researcher will focus only on aspects that relate to wealth and social identity. Otherwise, the material would merit an entirely new study.

### 1.6.4. Abraham's status in Luke's writings

In Chapter Five, the researcher will discuss the significance of Abraham in Lazarus and the Rich Man. Since Abraham's bosom is mentioned in the parable, it is necessary to look at how Luke understands the concept of being a child of Abraham and Israelite identity. In this discussion, the researcher will make use of texts throughout Luke-Acts, but will focus on a few. He starts out in the

early chapters contrasting the birth of Jesus and that of John the Baptist, all in the land of Israel, and in Acts he continually increases the Gentile presence in the Church.

To begin, the researcher will give a brief examination of Luke 1, 2, and 3. In chapters 1 and 2, Luke indicates that he will discuss what it means to be an Israelite or "child of Abraham" through allusions to Old Testament texts. Luke makes this topic explicit in Luke 3, where he tells his audience in no uncertain terms that they should not presume to have a favourable stance before YHWH or a social identity that would entitle them to be part of his Kingdom merely because they are descendents of Abraham (Luke 3:7-8); this introduces the thought that not all who are physical Israelites are in fact "children of Abraham".

Confirmation of this final point can be found in Luke's account of the Great Commission. Where a reader might expect to find descriptions of a nationalistic identity, we find that Jesus has given a command for the Good News to be preached to all the nations, starting from Jerusalem, then Samaria, then to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:46-47: Acts 1:6-8). "Israelite" as one who is physically Israelite is no longer a terminal identity according to Luke.

In the discussion of Luke's general view, reference will also be made to Stephen's speech in Acts 7. This appears to be an occasion which Luke uses to forward his view that not all physical Israelites are in fact "children of Abraham". He further shows that he does not view contemporary Jewish authorities as possessing such a social identity.

What is certainly implied in these instances is that Luke has a view of Abraham as the Jewish patriarch. However, not all who are of Israelite ethnicity have a legitimate claim to being his sons. Being favoured people as "Sons of Abraham" appears to be a terminal identity for Luke, as he praises Abraham and shows him as the father of Israel, but Luke would most likely echo Paul in saying that "they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham" (Romans 9:6b-7a).

It is worth noting that Abraham was an example of hospitality (Somov and Voinov 2017:1-11; Van Eck 2009). This fits in with Luke's concern for the poor. Although this is not the entire meaning that Luke grants to this parable, it is still worth noting. In Genesis 18, he hosts three men at Mamre at expense to himself. The researcher will examine how this applies to Lazarus and the Rich Man, especially with reference to a contrast between Abraham and the Rich Man.

It is again important to note that the researcher will focus on aspects that are relevant to wealth and social identity in order to avoid discussing material that would merit an entirely new study on its own.

## 1.7. Summary of this introduction

The researcher intends to analyse the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man from a literary perspective.

The researcher will discuss the socio-economic background in which Luke wrote his Gospel, and the sociological background of Jesus' day. Going into Lazarus and the Rich Man, it is necessary to understand that the concept of wealth in Luke's day was not limited to the amount of money in one's bank account, as it were, but also with the amount of land one owned and one's social standing. Money did play a part, but it was not everything.

This thesis will also look at Luke's treatment of Israel and the status of the Law and the Prophets in Luke's eyes. The researcher will argue that Luke uses Jesus to change his contemporaries' understanding of what it means to be an Israelite.

The researcher will also look at roughly contemporary parallel stories, as these can be used to gain insight into how such stories were used to construct social identities and what they were intended to teach in antiquity.

# Chapter Two - Background Information And Application to Lazarus and the Rich Man

In this chapter, the researcher will make a case for the diversity of social identities in Luke's immediate audience (both rich and poor, Jew and Gentile) and give a socio-historical background to Luke-Acts, describing concepts that are relevant to understanding Lazarus and the Rich Man. Events, including parables, are always told within a specific socio-historical context, and this influences the story-teller's intended meaning (see, for instance, Via 1967:32; Malina and Neyrey 1996; Bailey 2010). In other words, a shared context helps to clarify meanings that those from another culture may misunderstand (Bailey 2010). The researcher will begin the chapter with a broad description of these concepts and after this section, will describe how these apply specifically to Lazarus and the Rich Man.

When referring back to Lazarus and the Rich Man specifically, the content of this chapter will help mostly to illumine the earthly part of the parable (16:19-22). The chapter will first attempt to describe the identity of Luke's audience and will then describe the honour-shame culture in which Luke lived and the accepted social hierarchy of his day. This will help to show the social arrangement in the earthly part of the parable in terms of social identity.

## 2.1. Luke's audience

It will serve our purposes well to investigate the identity of Luke's audience. This will help us to understand the social identity of those to whom Luke is writing. Understanding this will help us to see why Luke shaped his writing the way he did and will help us to understand Lazarus and the Rich Man. As the researcher intends to show in this section, Luke's audience likely consisted of both rich and poor.

It is important to note that the identity of Luke's audience cannot be known with absolute certainty with the available data. However, some ideas are more likely to be correct than others. The researcher believes that there are clues in his writings to tell us who his audience is and the message he is ultimately trying to communicate to them.

### 2.1.1. The prosopographical approach

In Meeks' (1983) prosopographical approach to the New Testament, he discusses how we can know the social make-up of early Christianity by analysing, among other things, names of people found in the texts. In *The First Urban Christians*, he deals with the notion that Christianity was originally made up almost exclusively by people on the margins. He cites a man named Clement in Philippi (Philippians 4:2), who could well have been a descendent of Roman colonists (he has a Latin name) and Achaicus in Corinth as someone who had travelled, as Achaicus would be a strange nickname to

hold if one had spent his entire life in Greece (Meeks 1983:56). The mention of a member of Chloe's household travelling to Ephesus to speak to him speaks also of the wealth of some members of the congregation (Meeks 1983:57-59). There is therefore a presence of relatively wealthy people within congregations.

On the other hand, there is also direct evidence of the presence of lower-status people in the churches. Paul writes of the Corinthian congregation that "not many [of you were] wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" (1 Corinthians 1:26), which indicates that there certainly were people present who were neither wealthy nor of high status.

This is important to bear in mind, as first-century Christianity could be seen as being made up almost exclusively of people from lower socio-economic classes. This helps us to interpret Luke in light of what he wants to say to members of his audience who are from different socio-economic classes. This evidence of class conflict can help us to understand Luke's inclusion of Lazarus and the Rich Man in his Gospel.

We have evidence of conflict between classes. When writing about conducting the Lord's Supper, Paul writes that the Communion meal is meant to be used to remember Christ's death until the Second Coming; in the Corinthian church, it appears that fellowship is being conducted in such a way that rich members marginalise poor members (1 Corinthians 11:21-26). Paul makes a similar argument about the Spirtual gifts in Romans 12 after arguing that there is ultimately no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Romans 3:21-23, 9-11). He goes on in Romans 14 to urge believers to act according to the New Covenant, among other things to agree to disagree on Sabbath observance (Romans 14:5-6). We see here a conflict for which unity is urged. Again in Philippians 4:2, we see evidence of a potential split between Euodia and Syntyche, in which Paul urges unity. All this is to say that there was a presence of conflict in different churches, in some cases to do with social status or social identity.

While the prosopographical approach tends to focus on the Pauline churches, the researcher has chosen to include it here as he still believes it to be somewhat useful when understanding Luke's audience. Luke seems to have had close affiliation with Paul, as evidenced by the fact that Acts casts Paul in a generally positive light and focusses the main portion of the second half of the book on Paul's journeys. Furthermore, the work claims to be by Luke, whom Paul claims as a close associate (Philemon 24). The author, it seems, is therefore attempting to show himself to be in continuity with Paul, even if (as will be touched on below) he may have had disagreements with Paul. For these reasons, the researcher is cautiously optimistic that Luke's audience would have been congregations at least somewhat similar to Paul's congregations. Furthermore, redactions in Luke serve as evidence that Luke was reaching a generally urban audience. In the parable of the Great Supper, for instance, Luke

uses detailed descriptions of the immediate environment of a city, such as "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city" (Luke 14:21), whereas Matthew is content to leave out this part and merely mention going out into "the highways and hedges" (Matthew 22:9). It would seem on this basis that Luke would have been writing to an audience similar to those of the Pauline congregations.

### 2.1.2. Luke's own audience

It will do us well to investigate the identity of Luke's audience. because understanding their identity will help us to see why Luke shaped his writings the way he did and will help us to understand the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man.

To begin with, Esler (1987) argues that Luke's audience was mostly Christian and consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. He starts by rejecting the notion that we can know who Luke's audience is based on his preface (Esler 1987:24). He argues that such introductions were customarily added to books in Luke's day, and that this barely even indicates that Theophilus would be part of Luke's readership (Esler 1987:24). He may have been a reader, but it is not necessarily the case that he is even a representative of most of Luke's readers, and this section would therefore have little influence on the content of Luke's writings (Esler 1987:24). He does, however, add that it would be strange for Luke to write an introduction and then to write a literary work that is entirely unlike the preface, so there is some indication of what he intended to write in it (Esler 1987:25).

He argues that Luke's audience was unlikely to have been made up of Gentiles previously engaged in practices regarded as "idolatry" (Esler 1987:25). Rather than begin with terms with which "idolatrous" Gentiles would have been familiar, Luke begins his narrative with Jesus' birth, making allusions to the Old Testament that would be unintelligible to most Romans (Esler 1987:25). In Acts 17, Paul evangelises to Athenians using concepts with which they would be familiar, indicating that Luke knew how to write a defence of Christianity using Gentile non-Christian concepts. From this data, the conclusion is drawn that Luke-Acts could not have been written as a defence of Christianity to the Roman government.

Contra Esler, Lehtipuu (2007) argues that Luke was written for a Gentile audience. She begins by noting that even if Luke's audience was largely Jewish, first-century Judaisms were largely Hellenised (Lehtipuu 2007:46).

Acts records Paul going to Synagogues and starting his preaching there before moving on to other areas of towns. To Esler's (1987:43) mind, this is evidence for an audience consisting of both Jewish converts and Gentile God-fearer-converts, as a contradiction between Paul's missionary methods in his letters and Acts precludes Acts from simply being straight-forward history (Esler

1987:43). This then can tell us about the nature of Luke's audience. Esler argues from Josephus and a variety of Inter-Testamental Jewish texts that there was a class of Gentiles who had reverance for YHWH ("God-Fearers"), and since Acts often depicts Paul preaching to Jews in the synagogue and to "God-fearing" Gentiles, it can be concluded that Luke's audience is made up of converts who were previously "God-fearing" Gentiles and Jews (Esler 1987:40-45).

Kuhn (2015:63) views Luke's Gospel as the one which "boldly proclaimed the coming of a Kingdom that would turn current sociopolitical realities on their heads". He argues that Luke was formerly part of the elite class of the Roman Empire and that he used this position to reach other people in this social class (Kuhn 2015:63). He makes much of the fact that only a minority of people in the empire (2-5% according to Kuhn) were literate, with the highly skilled literacy of Luke reserved only for the upper elite (Kuhn 2015:57-58). Alexander (1998:73-76, 80-81) has argued that literacy rates were higher by referring to artefacts showing people of lower classes writing. She may well be correct; however, her argument falls short of proving that a member of a lower class could produce or read such a literary work as the Gospel of Luke. Her argument, if correct, shows that people who were not part of the literary elite could write basic, every-day writing; it does not prove that everyone in ancient Palestine could read and write. Kuhn's point therefore stands even if Alexander is correct that literacy rates in the ancient Mediterranean have been underestimated; her argument does not prove that the ability to read and write great literary works existed among people of several social classes.

Kuhn further argues that Luke was a member of the Jewish elite class. He emphasises that Luke is concerned at least to some extent with Torah piety, with Luke taking a more conservative stance toward Jewish Law than Paul (such as in Acts 15, where Luke has the Jerusalem council warn against eating food offered to idols while Paul states that this is permissible in 1 Corinthians 8:8) (Kuhn 2015:61). The main characters in the early Lukan narrative are depicted as loyal to the Torah (Luke 1:5-23, 59, 2:25-38), and he has both Jesus and the early disciples worshipping in the Jerusalem Temple on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16, Acts 2:46) (Kuhn 2015:61). According to Kuhn, we can therefore conclude that Luke was more likely to have been an Israelite than a Gentile.

Lehtipuu (2007:46-48) disputes what Kuhn writes regarding the Jewishness of Luke's audience. She agrees that Luke is part of the more highly educated parts of society but believes that he was a member of the Gentile elite because elements of his work show that he has received a classical education, such as his reference in Acts 17 to Greek poets. To the researcher's mind, Lehtipuu does provide a needed caution to heed before thinking that elements brought up by Esler (1987) and Kuhn (2015), and later Ravens (1995), necessarily lead us to the conclusion that Luke was a Jew. However, she does not, to the researcher's mind, refute the case they have made. As Lehtipuu (2007:46)

acknowledges, Judaisms of Luke's period were highly Hellenised. The degree of Hellenisation which occurred in each group under the umbrella of "Judaisms" differed from group to group, but the fact that it occurred could quite easily suggest that Luke was more likely to be a Hellenistic Jew than a Gentile. The links to the births of Old Testament prophets in Luke's birth narratives presented by Esler (1987) are subtle and suggest intimate knowledge of the text, whereas the reference to the Greek poet in Acts 17 is a mere passing reference. It therefore appears that, while Lehtipuu's caution should be heeded, Esler and Kuhn are correct to suggest that Luke is a Jewish author, albeit a Hellenised Jewish author.

Ravens agrees with Esler that Luke was not written for a pagan audience and also thinks that Luke is not necessarily addressed to a mostly elite audience. He regards the work as written to an exclusively Christian audience, made up substantially of Jewish members (Ravens 1995:13-14). Ravens is convinced that citations to Scripture would be a hindrance to non-Christian Gentile readers; he sees Luke as a book that requires a good understanding of the Old Testament to be understood properly (Ravens 1995:13). Many non-Christian Gentiles would have had trouble picking up the allusions, such as the allusion to Elijah and Elisha when Jesus raises the son of the widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17) (Ravens 1995:13). In other words, without the verses referred to being directly cited, a non-Christian Gentile reader would have a difficult time understanding the book, and Luke would have failed miserably at writing a defence of Christianity.

Ravens (1995:12) argues against the notion that Luke was a Gentile writing to a Gentile audience on the grounds that the name "Theophilus" could be used by Jews as well as Gentiles. What this would show is that, even if Kuhn is right to give weight to the dedication to Theophilus, it is difficult to use this as an indicator of the identity ofLuke's audience.

To the researcher's mind, Kuhn has not taken into account all of the evidence. He does make some noticeable points, such as the fact that Luke was written to turn the world as his contemporaries knew it upside down. It certainly would be seen as a challenge by a member of the Israelite or Roman elite reading it, as it certainly did challenge some of their hierarchical ways. In terms of socio-economic and class status, Luke has much to say on this being changed. However, this is not all that Luke attempts to write. It therefore seems to the researcher that Kuhn's arguments, while partially persuasive, do not take into account all the available evidence.

From the conclusions drawn from Meeks' prosopographical approach discussed above, it would seem that the Church at large was made up of both Jewish and Gentile converts, both from lower and upper classes. This appears to be the case in the Pauline churches and, with Luke's positive view of Paul (or at least its claim to be written by someone Paul identifies as a close associate), it would seem that Luke would be writing to similar congregations (or at least congregations with a difference in

wealth levels). Bearing this in mind, it would seem that Luke is written not exclusively to those in the upper echelons of society, although some members of his community would be.

Furthermore, Kuhn makes much of the prologue when determining the identity of Luke's audience, whereas Esler has shown to the researcher's satisfaction that this may not have had much impact on the content. These were formal requirements, and so not necessarily an indicator of the identity of the recipients of the text. This is further evidence that it is not necessarily members of the elite who are Luke's primary addressees. What Kuhn does appear to have correct in the researcher's understanding is that Luke was not written for a primarily Gentile audience.

Where Esler and Kuhn largely appear to agree is that the text was written to an audience of both Jewish and Gentile converts. Esler has shown satisfactorily that the text largely deals with issues of the relationships between Jews and Gentiles.

The researcher found his argument against the notion of Luke having been written for a largely "pagan" audience convincing. It would be strange for an author, especially one as seemingly well-educated as Luke, to have written an account of Jesus and the early Church assuming a "pagan" audience to have known about the Old Testament, let alone understand all the allusions. The evidence for Luke having been written for a Gentile audience seems to be based on the assumption of the accuracy of the traditional authorship of Luke, that Luke was a Gentile writing for a Gentile audience. As Kuhn (2015:62)points out, even if this assumption is correct, it does not tell us that Luke is a Gentile. He points out that "Syrian from Antioch" could be used as a geographical marker, as several Israelites lived outside of Israel in Luke's time (Kuhn 2015:62). What this tells us is that Luke is definitely not a Gentile writing to an audience devoid of knowledge of Judaism. Luke assumes that his readers have a knowledge of the Septuagint, as he makes constant references and allusions to the text, and presents Luke as a fulfilment of the Old Testament. This shows that Jesus is being defended as a Jewish Messiah, and this would be a strange defence to make to a "pagan" Roman audience.

However, when we take into account the cautionary note supplied by Lehtipuu (2007:46), that Luke shows signs of a classical Greek education, it appears to suggest that Luke is also writing to Gentiles who have converted to Christianity, and are therefore familiar with the notion of Christianity's being the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.

In conclusion, the reasonable conclusion is that Luke is a somewhat Hellenised Jew writing for an audience made up of both Jews and Gentiles. He shows signs of having been educated in both Jewish and Greek schools of thought and includes material that could be used to convince a person from either background. They also came from different social classes, as the prosopographical approach reveals.

### 2.1.4. Application to Lazarus and the Rich Man

The question remains of how this discussion applies to Lazarus and the Rich Man. The sources above largely describe relations between Jewish people and Gentiles, and this category does not appear to be present in Lazarus and the Rich Man; the parable appears at first to be talking about wealth and the proper use thereof for the benefit of others. Luke appears to be attacking people for having excessive wealth and not giving money to the poor for them to eat.

One point of relevance is that the above-mentioned categories help us, Luke's modern audience, to understand the categories in which Luke would have thought, including with regard to social identity. We see that Luke is defending the notion that Gentiles are indeed welcome as part of Israel under this New Covenant of believers who have accepted the Lordship of Jesus. Luke is using the parable to ask the question of what it means to be a true Israelite.

As Esler has argued, Luke seems to have much to say about table fellowship. He spends much space arguing that the social divide between Jew and Gentile was so wide that it would exclude them from even partaking in table fellowship with one another. In presenting such a number of cases in which the bridge is crossed between Jew and Gentile (as they are presented as enjoying table fellowship with one another without coming under the judgment of God), Luke has shown that discrimination, even against those previously thought of as furthest beyond the pale, was now inexcusable. Everyone is now welcome. The question that naturally follows is: how much more should one include members of the Jewish nation, even if they are people previously excluded? Here Luke contains information that should show us what he thought about social relationships with people in our own groups. We should bridge the divide so that we have fellowship with both in-groups and out-groups. What Luke has to say about relations between Jews and Gentiles also applies to relationships between two Jewish of different socio-economic status.

## 2.2. Ancient economies and personhood

Answering the question of the nature of "business-as-usual" will involve looking at the nature of an ancient economy. As has been stated previously, ancient economies relied heavily on social standing and land-ownership, as well as the amount of money in one's possession. Analysing ancient economies to find the nature of "business as usual" using only modern indicators, such as financial gain and net worth, will not be of much use on its own, hence the need to investigate and decipher ancient understandings of how economies worked. Since the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man is largely based on issues of wealth and identity, the researcher has decided to devote a fair amount of space to this question, as one cannot understand what Luke is attempting to say to his readers about wealth if

one misunderstands how the concept of wealth was understood in his day (Wi 2019; Yap 2016). After this section, the researcher will devote some space to a general application of these concepts to the parable itself.

The researcher has also decided to discuss the nature of personhood in antiquity because it was collective rather than individual. People were not understood to be the product of their own psychology; rather, they were understood to be a representative of the groups to which they belonged. As will be discussed below, the group would determine the person's status in society. While there was sometimes fluidity in a person's group identities, there were largely stable identity markers, with what we call "stereotypes" believed to be an accurate representative of all people in the group (Esler 2003:26). People were held to the standards of the groups with which they associated. This relates to social identity in that people were known by the group of which they were members rather than by their individual characteristics.

From the "stereotypes" attached to each group, it could be deduced which social identity the group held. This would determine the group entitlements and the groups general position in society, as well as ways in which it was acceptable for the group to act.

### 2.2.1. Personhood

Firstly, it is important to understand how the concept of "human" was understood in the ancient Mediterranean. It has often been said, correctly, that ancient Mediterranean people were collectivists. What this essentially entailed was that one had more responsibility towards ensuring the common good of the group than for ensuring that one's individual needs were met (Malina and Neyrey 1996)[1]. As far as writings from Josephus, Tacitus, Plutarch, and others go, it would seem that such a way of thinking was quite common in the Ancient Mediterranean (Malina and Neyrey 1996:3-4). While one may be tempted to look at such a view from a modern, individualistic perspective and conclude that such relations include an unhealthy codependency or even tyranny, this would have been the normal way of looking at life in Luke's day. Rather than judging such a world view, we would do well to take these concepts into account when attempting to understand the culture in which Luke is speaking through his writings in order to avoid misunderstanding.

In this way of thinking, it is important to see that people viewed themselves as a representative of the group of which they were a part. From this follows that, when praising someone, an ancient writer would include details that we in the modern world would consider unnecessary, at least as far as praising someone is concerned. For instance, one would include details of the person's geographical

1 It is true that Malina and Neyrey are mostly focused on Paul in this text. However, the concepts they use to analyse Paul are general in nature; they apply the general concepts to Paul. The researcher is applying their general concepts to Luke.

origin, which would point out the person's ethnicity (Malina and Neyrey 1996:23-24). From one's ethnicity, one could deduce characteristics that a person would be expected to hold, and the status of the family from which the person was born would be emphasised as this would tell us what the person would be expected to achieve, and the person would be praised for reaching certain goals determined by his origin (Malina and Neyrey 1996:24-26).

Deeds were praised, but not in the same way as modern deeds, i.e., not as mere individual achievements. Rather than only naming achievements as individual events, they were praised according to the virtue that the deeds revealed, such as the way in which deeds of valour in war could show the cardinal virtue of courage (Malina and Neyrey 1996:30). Deeds of fortune would describe a person's ascribed status.

More evidence of such notions, including evidence from other types of speech highlighting the way in which the concept of "person" was understood, could be discussed. However, the researcher thinks that this information will suffice to say that ancient Mediterranean views of people were more collectivistic. The point to keep in mind was that people were seen as representatives of the groups of which they were a part. A person was not viewed as a product of their own individual psychology and their own personality. A person who did not live up to the ideals expected from a member of their group was seen as "abnormal" or even a "sinner".

This understanding of personhood shows us that ancient Mediterranean concepts of personhood were more social than individual in nature, i.e., one was understood as a member of a group before being understood as one's individual personality. It is therefore beneficial to think in terms of social identity when analysing identity in the ancient Mediterranean.

### 2.2.2. Agriculture

Agriculture formed the basis of economic life in Ancient Palestine (Moxnes 1998:27). In modern times, manufacturing and innovation tend to lead to success; agriculture held centre stage in ancient economic thinking. Cities were pre-industrial, with the implication that cities were entirely dependent on the produce of the agricultural land outside the inner city (Moxnes 1998:28).

In antiquity, lands used for farming in villages were usually located near cities, where the elite, who controlled the surrounding land, would live (Oakman 1991:154; Rohrbaugh 1991:130-134). The elites, who lived in the cities and would prefer not to harvest their own crop, exerted control over the surrounding area and were "rewarded" with the lion's share of the crop harvested by "the peasants" (Oakman 1991:155; Wi 2019:23). In return, the elites would perform the administrative tasks of running the city (Oakman 1991:155; Rohrbaugh 1991:130-134). Thus the power structures were kept in

tact, and the elites got to keep ruling over those "beneath" them.

Reciprocity was the main component of exchange in the village. When an exchange occurred, two people would exchange goods, and the person who received goods would be in a non-financial "debt" to the person from whom they received the goods (DeSilva 2000:110; Oakman 1991:156). Balanced reciprocity, in which the "debt" would be paid and the goods exchanged would be of roughly equal value, was common between people who were of not-very-close kin; general reciprocity was common among people who were of close kin, in which the "debt" would be repaid after a long time, if at all, and it was not necessarily expected that the exchanges would be of equal value (Oakman 1991:156). The debtor did not technically owe the creditor, but it would be frowned upon if they refused a favour for one who had previously helped them (DeSilva 2000:110).

### 2.2.3. Limited goods

An important point to keep in mind is the concept of "limited goods", which essentially means that in the ancient Mediterranean, goods were generally believed to be in limited supply (see Malina 2001:113-114). Contrary to modern times, in which it is expected that more goods can be ordered if stocks run out, the ancient Mediterranean mindset saw goods as being finite in quantity. If one ran out of stock, the supply was finished. There was only a small amount to go around, and there was no thinking that one could merely produce more goods if the needed goods ran out.

Moxnes associates such a view with a peasant world (Moxnes 1998:77). The resources most prized, such as land, are seen as limited in quantity, so one gains at the expense of others. Such a view is also applied to non-material objects, such as honour, friendship, health, and status (Moxnes 1998:77).

Among other things, economic activity was expected to be used to increase one's honour. As will be discussed more fully in the section dealing with patron-client relationships (3.2.4.), honour could be held by a rich person giving wealth to people who had less. However, since honour was also seen as a limited good, honour was seen as something gained at the expense of another's honour, which would give the other a lower honour rating. One could not gain status without expending another's status, and so honour games would leave the "winner" more honourable and the "loser" less honourable.

This of course should be balanced against the fact that change and ancient forms of "entrepreneurship" (such as merchants and traders) were becoming more common from the Hellenistic Period onward. While such changes were occurring outside, it was possible to keep the village unaffected, as people in the community who had more money could be "encouraged" to give much of it over for the benefit of the village with the expectation that they would gain honour (Moxnes 1998:79).

### 2.2.4. Patron-client relationships

Patron-client relationships in many ways formed the backbone of the economy of the Ancient Roman Empire. If one was not able to find patrons to help one navigate one's way in the social world, one would find oneself ultimately unable to compete economically.

At the most basic level, patron-client relationships entailed relationships between two people, usually of differing social statuses, in which one person would perform favours for the other, and these favours would be returned in such a way as to grant higher honour to the one performing the favour. The patron was the person doing the favour and to whom the client owed his allegiance. The client was the person in "debt" to the patron. A public display of gratitude, in which the patron is praised, could suffice as a repayment of the debt, as it would increase the honour rating of the patron (DeSilva 2000:127-128).

Such methods were used to gain power. As one gained honour by ensuring that others had access to resources or were in some way "cared for" by the patron, the patron gained a client who would be in charge of ensuring that the patron gained honour or political power (DeSilva 2000:127-128; Kuhn 2015:14). Such exchanges were supposedly voluntary.

As would be expected, patron-client relationships were experienced differently by people in upper and lower classes. People in the upper or elite class gained associates, increasing their own networks (with the relationship being more close to actually voluntary), while people in lower classes tended to increase their "debts", even if they had, for example, some temporary relief from hunger (Combrink 1996:297; Kuhn 2015:14).

Similarly, "friends" did not always have the same connotations of modern times. The concept could be used to refer to those in a patron-client relationship, with a loyal client being viewed as a "friend" (Malina and Neyrey 1996:163; Moxnes 1991:245). Malina and Neyrey use the example of John 19:12, in which Pontius Pilate is threatened with having a reputation for not being a "friend" of Caesar. We see here that his identity resides not in his own efforts and status as governor of Palestine but as a client or "friend" of Caesar who by having Caesar's favour has the privilege of an administrative position in one of Caesar's territories (Malina and Neyrey 1996:163).

While they could occur through direct communication between social equals, a broker was often involved if the people in the patron-client relationship were from different social classes (Combrink 1996:296-297).

Following this line of thought, an important point needs to be made about the ancient Mediterranean understanding of freedom. It in no way entails the freedom of the individual to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, as the United States of America's Founding Fathers would have said it.

They were freeing themselves from Britain to live life completely on their own terms, not being the slave of a master. While the idea of being freed from one's master technically existed in Luke's day, one could not hope to enjoy a life where one lived entirely on one's own terms without regard to any master. If a slave was given freedom, he was freed from one master and given over to another i.e. he was "free" to serve the new master (Malina and Neyrey 1996:163). The dream of independence remained merely a dream, an ideal which could never be achieved. A freed slave became the client of a new patron (the relationship may not technically have been slavery, but one could not hope to escape the relationship without fulfilling obligations to the new patron). The patron performed a favour for the freedman, and so the freedman was expected to repay the debt.

### 2.2.5. Social hierarchy

While in the 21st century, one is more inclined to think of people as equals who should be treated and protected as such, this view of human beings was hardly the norm in Luke's world. Such ideas would in fact be considered revolutionary or perhaps even "crazy" by Luke's contemporaries. It is noteworthy that when making points often considered today to point to a belief in equality, Paul does not even use phrases such as "equality of all people", instead relying on phrases such as "neither Jew nor Greek...for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The researcher will be arguing that Luke, in a way similar to Paul, makes similar points that point to the equality of all, but first one needs to consider the accepted social hierarchy of Luke's day ("business as usual") to see exactly what Luke challenges and how he challenges it.

In some ways, the concepts of the patron-client relationship applied also to governments. Kuhn represents the social hierarchy as one with the following classes: Elites; retainers; wealthy merchants; peasants, artisans, and labourers; and "expendables" (Kuhn 2015:10).

The elite class, of course, contained the emperor and a small percentage of the population who enjoyed luxurious living. For the most part, this class consisted of those who were born to families who had a good relationship with the Emperor or from old aristocracies, and had maintained the honour of living at this level of society (Kuhn 2015:11). Others were clients of people at high levels, and they were able to lift themselves up by choosing good patrons. A small minority of this class consisted of people who, through either military prowess, their own political networking skills, or obtaining of much resources were able to make the correct political moves or become adopted by an important family, thus gaining access to the elite class (Combrink 1996:297; Kuhn 2015:11).

The retainers kept this order. This included the Roman military and several legal professionals who ensured that the laws keeping the elite in place were enforced while keeping a resemblance of

order (Kuhn 2015:11). Such people were posted throughout the empire, and they ensured that all laws were followed. This class could include tax collectors, who ensured the upward movement of resources from the peasants to the elite, maintaining the order which allowed the elite to enjoy living in luxury. Such a description paints them as callous and uncaring, and one can get such an impression from Kuhn's description. However, they did also maintain order and security. While they could have sinister motives, they did kept a resemblance of peace. They often protected a local populace from invaders. Roman fleets had destroyed piracy in the Mediterranean Sea, enabling trade between different areas of the Empire, although these trade relationships were not always equal. While acknowledging that the retainers did often enable the reign of an elite class who were often uncaring, it is important to acknowledge positive contributions against safety and banditry in the empire (see Thompson 1998:50-52, 60-61).

Peasants, artisans, and labourers often lived at near-subsistence levels. This group is described in Jesus' parable of the Labourers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), in which they are hired to work in the vineyard. Because honour codes forbade them from asking an employer for work, they had to wait around until someone asked them for their labour. As a result, they lived from paycheck to paycheck. In several cases, people in this class had lost land as members of the elite vied for power and expropriated land previously belonging to them (Kuhn 2015:13; Wi 2019:24-25). They often had to pay high taxes to elite members of society, and this kept them in debt (Kuhn 2015:12). In some cases, people who formerly worked the crops on small lands would have, out of desperation, made themselves slaves of a new landowner, thus restricting not only their economic power but even their freedom of movement (Wi 2019:39).

The class “expendables” includes people commonly believed to be outcasts: beggars, people with diseases or disabilities, and prostitutes (Kuhn 2015:11; Combrink 1996:296). Such people were at the very bottom of the social totem pole. While others were able to compete in societal events and rituals, “expendables” were excluded completely, regarded as unclean and therefore not allowed in temples and other holy sites. They were viewed as beyond the pale, and it was believed that one should not associate with such people as this would jeopardise one's status as a “clean” and “respected” member of society (see DeSilva 2000:269-311). Associating with them could be something of a social death sentence.

In practice, one could say that there was not much difference between peasants, artisans, and labourers and “expendables”. A man had full charge of his household and was not legally responsible to ensure safety or healthy working conditions for either his slaves or his day-labourers. Day-labourers could technically choose not to work in squalid conditions, but the need to eat made such a decision

unbearable. Slaves had to return, as they had a legal obligation to stay with masters. Such were not seen as valuable simply by being human; they were seen as being worth less than their masters. While they performed essential services, they were also "expendable" as it is doubtful that employers and masters cared much for any particular worker. If one was lost, they could simply get another one. Thus the machine of workers was kept well-oiled.

This hierarchy was kept alive largely through patron-client relationships. On an official level, the emperor acted as the supreme patron of the empire (hence *princeps* or "first citizen"). He was in charge of the distribution of resources throughout the empire, and in return he would gain the allegiance of the empire's people (including the people of subject nations) (DeSilva 2000:112-113; Kuhn 2015:14). It was not always directly from top to bottom. Those in the middle would form relationships with each other and people of lower and upper classes (DeSilva 2000:114).

Unlike the upper class, however, people in the lowest non-expendable classes were more focused on surviving than on advancement, the result being that paying for their immediate needs kept them dependent on higher classes without costing much money to those on top of the social hierarchy (Kuhn 2015:14). This, of course, resulted in huge income inequality between lower classes and upper classes, as the smaller number of elites were funded by taxes collected from a large number of peasants.

The emperor himself was a client of the gods. The gods were the supreme patrons of the Roman Empire, with such relationships to some extent existing even among the gods and goddesses (DeSilva 2000:113; Kuhn 2015:18). In such relationships, the emperor functioned as an intermediary between the human world and the divine world. The gods themselves thus decreed that society should exist in such a way that a social hierarchy would always be in place. Even if an emperor wanted to declare an equality of people, it would be difficult to do so when the social hierarchy was believed to be the best way to organise a society in order to get favour from the gods.

At a more local level for Luke, the Temple functioned as a sort of intermediary that controlled Palestine as its patron (Kuhn 2015:14). The temple authorities were to ensure that the people were looked after, and the people were in turn supposed to guarantee them honour, ensuring the temple authorities' place at the top of the Palestinian social hierarchy.

### 2.2.6. Kinship groups

While modern people may associate economic productivity almost entirely with the individual, ancient economies also saw the family/kinship group as important. The family as a unit was important here. Rather than profits, families acted as a means to increase livelihood (Moxnes 1998:33).

Since they believed in "limited goods", the goal was not to increase profits as much as possible but to increase the livelihood of the family.

While on the macro-scale one could see some form of a scramble for resources, such could not be said of individual households. Within the family, the emphasis was on making sure each person's needs were met, and the resources obtained would go towards ensuring that everyone living in the household had a fair share of the resources (Moxnes 1998:33; Oakman 1991:155-156). The sharing of resources within the family strengthened family bonds, which was said to strengthen the *polis* and ultimately the empire itself (Moxnes 1998:33). In other words, each household worked to produce what it needed to survive while sharing the resources among each member.

The family's economic work was embedded in their lives. What this entails is that, instead of each member going out to work and earn a living and bringing the money they earned back to the family, the family would work together to till the soil and harvest crops, from which part of the produce would feed the family and part would feed the elite (Oakman 1991:155; Rorhbaugh 1991:130-134). If the families were not in charge of a crop-making business, they would also work from home. Crafted items, such as pottery, would also be produced within households, as large-scale factories would not exist for nearly two millennia (Oakman 1991:155).

Work groups functioned in a similar way. People in Luke's day tended not to think about what they wanted to be and then decide on a career based on what they wanted to become. There was no attitude of "you can be whatever you want to be", and changing professions was not easy. Work groups defined certain groups of people who worked together. They would associate with each other, often being required to live on the same street if they were allowed to live in a city (Malina and Neyrey 1996:162). People would join a group centred around their trade, and the members of these groups would participate together in certain events, such as burying their dead (Malina and Neyrey 1996:162). Although there were exceptions and some ways to climb the social ladder, sons would for the most part follow their fathers' trade, imbibing the social attitudes and trade craft from those around them (DeSilva 2000:173; Malina and Neyrey 1996:162). Whereas one may now consider such an attitude classist, in Luke's day it was thought that one could say much about a person just by knowing their trade.

It will suffice to say it to say that sons followed their fathers' trade, and continued their family business. Rather than focusing on "climbing the corporate ladder" or pursuing a desired career and social world, sons would follow their fathers, continuing to provide the same standard of living for the

family in the next generation.

Finally, the status of one's ancestors had a bearing on one's status. If one had honourable ancestors, it could result in one having a high amount of ascribed honour (the concept of "ascribed honour" is discussed in the section on honour and shame) (DeSilva 2000:173-177). Since this was the case, one could decide which ancestors to include when writing about a person, as Matthew and Luke do in their genealogies of Jesus (DeSilva 2000:173-177). In short, one inherited the honour rating of one's ancestors in one's kinship group. Thus through the ascribed honour (discussed in 2.2.8.) of one's kinship group, one gained a social identity with which one was born, along with a low or high number of group entitlements.

### 2.2.7. Village/city life

Moxnes (1998) draws attention to the fact that the concept of a village was different in Luke's day to our day. There would be much farmland in the countryside and in a village setting, on which villagers would work (Moxnes 1998:83). It was not, however, owned by the villagers. It was, at least indirectly, owned by the Roman Emperor, although he in actuality exerted little actual control over any specific piece of land. Rather, while indirectly owned by the emperor, it was in reality controlled mainly by rich elites, who benefited from the labour provided by villagers/peasants (Crossan 1998:221; Oakman 1991:164; Rorhbaugh 1991:131).

With regards to distribution of resources, those within a village were expected to share resources with each other and to live within a low budget, with an exception being made for village-wide celebrations (Oakman 1991:166). The rich man in the parable of Luke 12, where the man has worked the ground (or hired slaves or free labourers to do it for him) and has decided to use the wealth he has generated to sustain him for the rest of his life while he does not work, goes against such accepted views of how village economics should function. Jesus' rebuke of the rich man in the parable makes sense, as it would be seen as selfish to do such a thing as one is not sharing with the other villagers.

In terms of patron-client relationships, these did occur in villages among people of lower social classes. It would often happen that one would do a favour for another villager. While it was not technically required that one paid back the favour, it would be frowned upon and dishonourable if one who had been helped by such a favour refused to help someone with a similar favour when one was able (DeSilva 2000:110-111).

The elites lived nearby in cities. From the cities they would largely control village life, as they

tended to be the owners of land (Oakman 1991:156). They also tended to try and control more and more land, which of course could lead more small land-owners without land on which to work, which in turn would lead to the former small land-owners becoming day-labourers (Oakman 1991:156).

A final point to be made in this section was that losing land could cause villagers to need to turn from agricultural work to artisanal work, such as pottery and crafts, and such work was often performed for subsistence-level financial remuneration (Crossan 1998:230).

### 2.2.8. Honour and shame

Honour and shame determined one's standing within a community. Malina refers to it as indicating one's status across ancient axes of power, namely gender, status, and religion (Malina 2001:31). This would, of course, determine the level of respect due to a person, with a high degree of respect due to those deemed to have high honour and vice versa. As in many societies throughout time, expected actions differed depending on whether one was a ruler or "peasant", man or woman, human or god (with the added distinction between male and female within the pantheon). Honour ratings and relationships with people of different honour ratings determined how people were to interact and which actions they should take when interacting with each other. In some cases, the right course of action could be ambiguous (see, for instance, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, a 5th-century-BCE trilogy of plays in which Athena presides over a court case where it has to be decided whether or not Orestes acted honourably in killing his mother, who had killed his father).

Honour was the combined value of the esteem one gave to oneself and the value given to one by society at large, and a greater honour rating gave a person more power (Malina 2001:31-32). Malina illustrates this with several examples, and the researcher will use the example of the teacher-student relationship. The teacher had, by default, a higher honour rating than the student by virtue of the teacher-student relationship. Perhaps a student disagrees with the teacher. While a modern university environment allows or even encourages students to ask questions or even disagree with teachers, a student in antiquity would be seen as acting in a way inconsistent with his position (although there were exceptions, teachers and students were both more likely to be male than female) (Malina 2001:32). The student would be dishonouring his teacher while showing himself not to understand his own position. Furthermore, the teacher would be assumed to be correct, as he held the higher position in the hierarchy (Malina 2001:32).

A last important point about honour is that it can be either ascribed or acquired (Combrink

1996:295; Malina and Neyrey 1991:28-34). Put simply, "ascribed honour" refers to honour with which one is born, and "acquired honour" refers to honour that one obtains by acting honourably, winning challenges against other honourable people, or through patron-client relationships.

Shame, on the other hand, was seen as a "sensitivity to the opinions of others" and was seen as positive (Combrink 1996:296). It meant that one was sensitive to one's honour rating and therefore acted in such a way as to avoid shame. It was different from being shamed, which entailed losing one's honour (Combrink 1996:296). Sensitivity to one's honour status therefore prevented one from acting shamefully and becoming shamed.

This section has a particular relevance for social identity, as one's honour status revealed tne group to which one belonged, as well as one's group entitlements.

## 2.3. Application to Lazarus and the Rich Man

While this section will not be an exhaustive look at how these concepts apply to Lazarus and the Rich Man, the researcher will in this section give an overview of how these concepts apply to the parable. The researcher will refer to the ways in which rich and poor were understood in Luke's day, as discussed above, and discuss how Luke is identifying each character as a member of each group. Then the researcher will discuss briefly how Luke uses these concepts to overturn the expected norms in his society.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the researcher believes that Luke was written to a mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles, with most of the Gentiles being God-fearers who would have understood the Septuagintal references without further explanation. In his writings, Luke often refers to "children of Abraham" (Luke 3:8, 16:23, Acts 7:17). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the question of the identity of "child of Abraham" and the question of who could be called a "child of Abraham" would have been on the mind of Luke's readers. Luke's reference to Abraham in this parable therefore seeks to answer this question (this will be discussed further in chapter 5). This identity marker would not have played a huge part in Luke's telling of the story, as this story is not a story meant to justify the Gentile mission or general inclusion of Gentiles in the Church without them having to obey all facets of the Mosaic Law. It does, however, raise questions about what it means to be a "child of Abraham", and shows that some who think they are part of Abraham's "family" are in fact on the outside.

Since Luke records Jesus telling this story in Palestine, it would be reasonable to expect that Jesus and his listeners would have been referring to two Jewish characters. This is rendered clearer as

Luke has previously, in the immediate context, described the Pharisees as "lovers of money" (Luke 16:14). The Pharisees are here depicted as those within Judaism who loved money and had access to more wealth than the average Palestinian. They, according to Luke, would have had access to all the available power through their wealth, as they would have had the means to secure patrons to increase their honour. Whether or not this is a historically accurate description of the Pharisees is not relevant for our purposes here, as the researcher is interested in establishing how the parable fits into the Lukan narrative rather than questions of historicity.

The Pharisees were therefore depicted as those taking advantage of the *ptochoi* (roughly "poor", the researcher has decided to use the word *ptochoi* as it includes the connotations which would have been attached to the word in a Lukan context). The *ptochoi* suffered at the hands of those who were rich and exploited them.

As far as Jewish-Gentile concerns go, it is important to note that both characters in the parable are most likely Jewish. Luke's Jesus is here trying to present the Pharisees as those within the Jewish community who are rich and exploit the poor members of the Jewish community.

### 2.3.1. Lazarus as a *Ptochos*

Lazarus' place on the social ladder, of course, was as a *Ptochos*. As such, he was neither in a place to have access to higher positions nor in a place to work his way up into one. He would be shunned by those around him, who saw him as "unclean" and undeserving of partaking in the life of Israel. He was the lowest of the low in Israel in the eyes of his contemporaries; he was not allowed to associate or join religious festivals, and most people would choose not to associate with him as he would render them as unclean as he himself. He would have been compelled to live such a life, devoid of affection and the favour of others and destitute, with no hope of gaining access to the basic minimum he needed to survive.

In Luke's description, Lazarus sits at the Rich Man's gate, hoping for a small share of the food the Rich Man ate and would not deign to give to Lazarus. The Rich Man would not deign even to be in the presence of Lazarus, who lived every day of his life at the Rich Man's gate. The Rich Man protected his honour by not helping Lazarus. He avoided losing his "honourable" position on the social ladder by refusing to associate with the outcast.

The dogs came to Lazarus and licked his sores (16:21). These animals acted like the friends that Lazarus did not have. By licking his sores, these animals showed compassion on Lazarus. Since he was cast out of human life in his world, Lazarus was forced to associate with dogs.

Lazarus was not seen as "whole". A person needed to be "whole" and "without blemish" in order to be an accepted member of his community (DeSilva 2000:277). Lazarus was a man infected with sores, and this meant that he had a defect. He would have to stay away from other members of his community so as not to infect them with his "uncleanness" or "defect". A common man may have had the obligation to interact with such a man, but no rich man would ever deign to interact with him. Thus the divide between him and those richer than him was perpetuated even further as a result of his "defect". He would remain a *ptochos* his entire life.

The result of this was his exclusion from the community. This meant that he had nothing to offer the Rich Man. With nothing to offer, he was left to his own devices in order to gain the bare necessities and was dependent on the generosity of others for his daily bread. With the divisions existing in the city, which left him outside the gate of the Rich Man's massive dwelling, he could only hope to contact the Rich Man through the generosity of one who would help him. Anything he obtained would be by the grace of others. He could not hope to work his way up the social ladder through patron-client relationships because he had nothing to offer a potential patron. He could not increase the honour of such a patron. Lazarus was low on the social ladder, and so praises from him would mean nothing in terms of increasing the Rich Man's honour. With nothing to offer, the Rich Man left him without resources.

We see here that Lazarus had the social identity of "*ptochos*". This social identity carried virtually no group entitlements, so he was left destitute. He did not have the group entitlement of access to resources that he needed to gain in order to survive or even to enter the Temple (since he was "blemished", it would be difficult for him to gain entrance). He thus appears excluded from the social group with whom YHWH has made his covenant (this concept will be discussed more in chapter four).

### 2.3.2. The Rich Man's Identity

The Rich Man's identity, of course, is that of a rich man. As we have discussed above, this meant far more than that he had made a large amount of money. He was far from the top of society, as he was not the emperor and does not appear to have been any sort of politician, but he certainly lived well.

It is reasonable to suggest that the Rich Man was a patron to several clients. Because of his great wealth, he would have been able to attract the attention of several potential clients, who would in turn honour him in return for receiving some of his wealth or advancing up in social ranks by his graces. He would have earned the praise of several, and such praise would help the Rich Man increase

his honour rating.

What is peculiar about the Rich Man, however, is that he is shown to be quite extravagant with his wealth. He is depicted as someone who ate well and wore purple every day (Luke 16:19). That he ate well is to be expected; not only did he eat well himself but such banquets would be expected in order for him to gain more clients and to impress the clients he already had (DeSilva 2000:107-108). Such clients would then have come under obligation to him to return the favour. The peculiar thing, on the other hand, is that he is shown flaunting large amounts of wealth for himself. Purple was usually reserved for kings (hence the decision of the author of Mark to have Roman soldiers clothe Jesus in a purple garment to mock his claims of being a Jewish King in Mark 15:17). Garments in purple were expensive because the creature that was needed to make the colour was rare, and it was therefore reserved almost entirely for kings and emperors. Luke shows through this motif that the Rich Man is a king in this life, but that he will no longer be a king when the Kingdom (with its true King) arrives (or he will be revealed as never having been a true king in the first place). What is certain is that the Rich Man spent lavish amounts of money on himself. While it is probable that such a character would have formed patron-client relationships with others, such are not mentioned in the parable. He could have been shown to be dishonourable as he was spending excessive amounts of money helping himself, withholding it from those around him. He should have, according to the social codes of Luke's day, shared the money by taking on clients and becoming a patron. The excessive spending on himself could be seen as evidence that he was not spending enough on the people that honour codes demanded he spend money on.

In other words, the Rich Man was supposed to spend money on his community, but he did not spend much on his community. He echoes the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21. While he would have spent some on patron-client relationships, he kept much of the money to himself, and so does not necessarily keep an honourable place in society.

The Rich Man held the social identity of “rich man”. He believed that he had access to certain group entitlements. He believed that he had the group entitlement of high honour, which he could obtain through patron-client relationships (performing favours would grant him the honour of being praised by the one for whom he has performed the favour). However, he did not spend his money on his community in any meaningful way. He amassed great wealth, quite possibly through land expropriation, and did not gain honour through lavish spending on his surroundings, as evidenced by the expensive clothing he wore.

This could perhaps even lead to status illegitimacy on the part of the Rich Man. Because he spent lavishly on himself without much regard for his community, he could be seen as someone who did not have a legitimate claim to the social identity he claimed.

### 2.3.3. Honour and the Rich Man and Lazarus

The Rich Man and Lazarus were, to an extent, kept apart by honour codes. The Rich Man, like just about everyone else in his day, sought to keep his "honourable" position. Lazarus did not have much of an honourable position; as a *ptochos*, he was largely barred from society. He could technically gain honour from someone's grace, but such an occurrence was a pipe-dream.

While the Rich Man was seeking to preserve his honour, Lazarus was outside his gate, suffering from sickness and emaciated with hunger. The Rich Man could potentially lose honour by associating with Lazarus; if he helped Lazarus, he would not be paid back. The "honourable" thing was to invite guests to banquets who could repay him, earning him a patron-client relationship and keeping his honour intact, possibly even increasing it through the allegiance of more clients. From a materialistic and social perspective, he lacked incentive to help Lazarus. He would not gain a client, as Lazarus was not honourable enough to add to the Rich Man's honour. The Rich Man therefore would not risk losing his own honour by lending a helping hand.

### 2.3.4. City divisions

Lazarus, of course, would have lived outside the area in which the Rich Man lived. Cities were divided in such a way that people of different social classes had relatively little contact with each other (Rohrbaugh 1991:132-133). The Rich Man would have lived in a luxurious house in the area where the elite were permitted to live, with the *ptochoi* kept out. This perpetuated the divide between the common man and the elite. *Ptochoi*, such as Lazarus, could not hope to cross the divide and earn a place within the limits of the area where they might gain the necessities of life.

The Rich Man's life in the elite area led to his not having to share the same space as Lazarus. The divide was in place between them, never to be removed. Lazarus was therefore out of sight and out of mind as far as the Rich Man was concerned. He did not have to see Lazarus' poverty with his own eyes, while Lazarus had to experience it first-hand away from social life with the elites of society. The Rich Man was able to close his eyes and "shut his ear to the cry of the poor" (Proverbs 13:21a) as he was able to keep Lazarus at a distance due to the divisions of his city.

The Rich Man also had a gate, which would mean that he would have seen Lazarus, and therefore known that he was at the gate and suffering due to his malnourishment and lack of shelter

(Bredenhof 2020:53). This chasm would be replicated in the afterlife, with Lazarus being in the "rich" section in Abraham's bosom and the Rich Man being in torment in Hades (Van Eck:2009:1, Bredenhof 2020:53). While for the most part he could have avoided Lazarus, he would have had to see him at his gate from time to time.

While the Rich Man was able to keep Lazarus out of sight in his earthly life, the afterlife held different circumstances. From his place of comfort in the arms of Abraham, whom the Rich Man thought to be his father, Lazarus ate and was filled, while the Rich Man endured torment, without any hope of relief (Luke 16:26). The proverb quote earlier goes on: "...Will cry himself and not be heard" (Proverbs 13:21b). The Rich Man has ignored the cry of the poor man, and now is himself not heard. Luke shows Lazarus to be a true representative of the house of Israel, as he was part of the *ptochoi* whom Jesus called to himself while decrying those who had become rich at their expense. The Rich Man's conduct showed him not to be a member of the house of Abraham. The divide was therefore put into place again in the afterlife, with Lazarus on the pleasurable side and the Rich Man on the tormenting side – a reversal of what had happened during their earthly lives.

### 2.3.5 Diagnosing Lazarus

There is the question of precisely which health problems ailed Lazarus. The Greek word used to describe Lazarus' condition is *helkos*. It is difficult to use this word to refer specifically to boils or any other kind of wound because the word can refer to "wound" in the broadest sense (Strong:2018:180). In Homer's *Iliad*, for instance, the word refers to a wound on Menelaos resulting from being shot with an arrow shot by Pandaros (Homer *Iliad* 4.190). Hippocrates, after whom the Hippocratic Oath is named, uses this word in his treatise on joints to describe a fracture (Hippocrates *On the Articulations* 68). We should therefore be wary lest we rush to judgment that Lazarus' wounds were leprous in nature or the result of an ancient skin disease. However, the fact that his wounds do not appear to heal would appear to suggest that they are part of a somewhat permanent condition. Such a condition could potentially render him unclean and dissuade others from associating with him.

### 2.3.6. Lazarus and the dogs

There now is the question of the role played by the dogs. While one may be tempted to say that dogs are used here to show that Lazarus is part of the lowest of the low, such a view would be too simplistic and would not take all of the available data into consideration. John Paul Heil rejects such a view (Heil 1999:138). Likewise, Bredenhof (2020:53) argues that dogs are viewed as unclean,

appealing to Leviticus 11:27 and talking about the "overwhelmingly negative portrayal of dogs in the Hebrew Scriptures" to justify his view (although without giving further details or references in the Hebrew Scriptures).

Smit (1978:636) even goes so far as to say that the dogs are making Lazarus' situation even worse by licking his sores, and says that the dogs are treating Lazarus "as if he was already dead". Scott (1989:151) furthers this view by mentioning that dogs are referenced in the Old Testament as eating the bodies of "unclean" people who have died, such as Naboth, who attempted to steal land for himself and was punished by dying and being eaten by dogs.

Strong (2018) rejects such a view, and argues using ancient sources that dogs were not universally viewed as being unclean. To begin, he appeals to the fact that dogs are found in Ancient Levantine archaeology, including in reliefs which depict dogs even being given ritual burials, with the assumption that such burials would not be given to animals thought to be "vermin" (Strong 2018:185). He then appeals to Isaiah 56:10-11, in which guard-dogs are described; these dogs who are supposed to be on guard do not bark to let the watchman know that an enemy is approaching (Strong 2018:186). He then appeals to Jesus in Mark 7:27-30//Matthew 15:26-28, in which Jesus compares a Syro-Phoenician woman to dogs under a table eating crumbs (Strong 2018:186). According to Strong, this is evidence for the fact that dogs were domesticated in Luke's day. Furthermore, he appeals to the Mishnah, in which debates are held which assume the presence of domesticated dogs, thus showing them not to be inherently unclean (Strong 2018:185-186).

Strong goes even further, suggesting that the dogs are thought of as attempting to heal Lazarus (Strong 2018:188). He cites ancient texts in this regard. For instance, he cites Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* to suggest that dog saliva was thought of as having healing power. Here, Apollonius orders a once-rabid dog to lick the sores of a child he had infected, and the wounds are healed (Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 6.43). Aelian talks about dogs being able to heal themselves with their tongues, although it is worth noting that he does not mention an application of dog saliva to humans (Aelian *On the Nature of Animals* 8.9). This, to Strong, is evidence that dogs would use their saliva in an attempt to heal each other from diseases (Strong 2018:189). The dogs would therefore be acting with a heart to heal Lazarus of his wounds.

Adewale takes a similar view to Strong when describing Lazarus' situation with the dogs. He mentions that, from an African perspective, dogs are not vermin and suggests that this has helped him to see the dogs in a similar light in Lazarus and the Rich Man (Adewale 2006:35). He refers to dogs'

burials in burial plots as evidence that dogs were not necessarily considered unclean in a Jewish world-view (Adewale 2006:35). People were willing even to pay a fee to have a dog lick their wounds in order to heal them (Adewale 2006:35). He argues against views which would suggest that Lazarus is made to look unclean by his association with dogs. He sees irony in the fact that the "beasts" are the ones who help Lazarus by attempting to heal his wound while the Rich Man, who was expected to help Lazarus by virtue of also being human and an Israelite, made no effort to help Lazarus (Adewale 2006:35). He goes on to say that Luke views the Rich Man as being lower than even the dogs, as the dogs act more like "children of Abraham" than the Rich Man (Adewale 2006:35).

Kenneth Bailey (2008:385-386) shows, convincingly to the researcher's mind, that both views (that of dogs being unclean and that of dogs helping Lazarus) can be harmonised. On the one hand, he takes a similar view to Adewale and Strong in that he states that dogs were in fact thought to have healing properties in their saliva (2008:385). On the other hand, he also mentions that dogs were not considered pets in the ancient Middle East, citing biblical verses (Isaiah 66:3, 2 Peter 2:22) and the Mishnah to prove his point that Palestinian Jews viewed them as unclean, even going as far as to mention them alongside pigs (2008:368). Dogs are not pets in the ancient Middle East; the Rich Man's dogs would have functioned as guard dogs, tied with a chain (2008:368).

In the researcher's view, Bailey has made the most convincing case. In order to make his case for the inherent uncleanness of dogs, Bredenhof had to disregard evidence to the contrary; Adewale and Strong had to disregard Bredenhof's evidence in order to make their case that dogs were healers and not unclean. Bailey has shown us that the dogs could have both characteristics: they are used as representations of both Lazarus' uncleanness and friendship in their attempt to heal Lazarus of his wounds with their saliva. What this shows is that even the dogs, who are supposed to be guarding the Rich Man against Lazarus, take Lazarus' side. It shows also that the "unclean" creatures are more sympathetic than the rich of Israel are in Luke's day.

Adewale's comments on the irony of the situation are certainly useful when it comes to understanding the function of the dogs in this passage. The creatures considered by society at large to be unclean ended up being the creatures that helped Lazarus to become clean. Lazarus has been rejected by society at large, with no-one to help him out of his negative situation. The Rich Man and his friends have rejected Lazarus; they have seen him at the Rich Man's gate and refused to help him.

Taking into account the analyses by Adewale, Bredenhof, and Strong, it appears that we see a story in which the lowest of the low are shown to be doing what they should be doing. The Rich Man

refuses to associate with Lazarus. Rather than refusing to share his wealth, the Rich Man's moral offence appears to be that he refuses to associate with Lazarus. His social identity "rich" means, to him at least, that he has to associate only with those who share his identity and those that can increase his social credit (clients and potential clients). His identity, he believes, entitles him to the group benefit of being allowed to increase his wealth in any way he pleases; he also believes that he has no obligations to honour even what could be considered the basic rights of a *ptochos* such as Lazarus. He believes himself exempt from having to honour any property rights granted to Lazarus (such as the year of Jubilee, in which he should have restored land to Lazarus). He furthermore believes he holds a group entitlement to a "chasm" between him and Lazarus. The dogs, on the other hand, take the time to associate with Lazarus, and experience no displeasure at a potential loss of honour for associating with him. They do not believe themselves to hold social identities which allow them to increase their wealth while mistreating those who are considered beneath them (by taking away their means of providing themselves with basic resources). They merely do the best they can by associating with Lazarus and attempting to heal his wounds.

Regardless of the fact that dogs were often seen as unclean, it appears that they were trying to help Lazarus. The views of Scott (1989) and Smit (1978), that the dogs were aggravating Lazarus' situation, appear not to be applicable. The dogs are attempting to be friendly to Lazarus in the best way they know. They are not attacking him in any way.

## 2.4. Concluding remarks

In this section, we have seen thatbeing a *ptochos* (roughly "poor person") had social consequences as well as financial ones. The *ptochos* did not have the means to bring honour to any patron and so had little hope of securing a better position in society. Lazarus fits such a description. He is cast out of human society, with only animals (dogs) as his friends. Such a society as one that excludes Lazarus is shown not to be one that is included in the Kingdom of God.

This chapter helps us to understand the character of Lazarus in the parable. We can see that Lazarus is a fictional character, as the introduction to the parable, as well as its placement between other parables, resembles that of a parable, which would tell a fictional tale (Blomberg 2007:52). This story is most likely not intended to describe actual events (and certainly not events that occurred in space-time history).

Lazarus is presented with the social identity of *ptochos* and, as a result, the social entailments which come with such an identity. He is left to associate with dogs, as his social identity does not give

him the group entitlement to attain his necessities from giving the Rich Man a higher honour status. He barely even has the social identity of "human", as seen from the fact that he associates with dogs more than he associates with people, and he does not receive even the benefits associated with being a member of the social group "human".

The material discussed in this chapter helps to illuminate the first part of the parable, to which the researcher will refer as the "earthly" portion of the parable (Luke 16:19-22). In terms of honour and shame, wealth, and friends, Lazarus has virtually nothing. He has a social identity which is seen as lower than that of the dogs. While the dogs were indeed trying to heal his sores by licking them, they were still largely seen as unclean. The dogs, however, with their social identity, at least had an in-group benefit or entitlement to scraps of food from the Rich Man's table.[2] Lazarus enjoys no such benefit; he has little entitlement as a *ptochos* as he is barely even afforded the in-group benefit of asking for food from the Rich Man. The only benefit he gets is being carried to the Rich Man's gate. Furthermore, his group, *ptochos*, did not give him the opportunity to bring honour to a patron; he did not have the in-group benefit of being allowed to advance through the ranks as a client of a patron, and this gave him little opportunity to earn a living.

Lazarus also had the social identity of "Israelite", but as the researcher will discuss in chapterfour, he did not receive all the benefits to which this social identity would be thought to entitle him. As will be discussed further in chapter five, as an Israelite, he should have had access to the in-group benefit of having access to family land, which he could use to provide food for himself and his family. He did not have access to this benefit because those who owned land (possibly from taking it from others) did not allow them to have it.

In short, Lazarus had two social identities: one as an "Israelite" and one as "*ptochos*". In Lazarus' case, one of these had to supersede the other and function as his terminal identity. His treatment by fellow Israelites made "*ptochos*" his terminal identity: by depriving him of group entitlements of his identity as "Israelite", others have left him as a *ptochos*, with little access to any necessities at all.

The Rich Man, on the other hand, appeared to have a more favourable social identity. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty whether or not Luke was referring to a man who had directly co-operated with Rome, but he certainly did not spare himself from Rome's benefits. However, he did

[2] It is indeed strange to think of dogs as having a social identity. However, since these dogs live in human society and interact with humans, it is reasonable in the researcher's view to assign one to them ~~as~~because their association with humans means that they have a certain status among humans.

not always act according to the expected responsibilities.

The Rich Man has both "Rich Man" and "Israelite" as his social identities (both would most likely have been true in his view). As an Israelite, he would have believed that he had the in-group benefit of being allowed to live in the land to which God had delivered his people. As a "Rich Man", he most likely believed that he had the in-group benefit of being allowed to amass wealth, in both monetary and social terms. However, he did not always act in line with his social identity of "Rich Man": he would have been expected to share his wealth with clients and not spend it lavishly on himself.

The Rich Man took advantage of the benefits of these two social identities, but did not allow others to benefit from their social identity as "Israelite". For instance, as will be discussed further in chapter four, the Rich Man's social identity of "Israelite" would have allowed him the in-group benefit of living in the land of Israel. However, by acting in accordance with what he believed his social identity of "Rich Man" to entail him, he denied this benefit to others of the social identity of "Israelite", who also should have shared this in-group benefit. His social identities of "Rich Man' and "Israelite" could not coexist in his case; "Rich Man" became his terminal identity because it obscured his social identity of "Israelite".

In later chapters, we will see a reversal of sorts: the social identities of the Rich Man and Lazarus will be swapped. For now, it will suffice to say that during their earthly lives, their social identities that were determined largely by wealth (Lazarus as a *ptochos* and the Rich Man as a "Rich Man") became their terminal identities; their in-group benefits and general lifestyles were determined by these social identities and not others that Luke considered more important.

# Chapter Three - Similar Stories From Antiquity

One of the main points of contention in this thesis is that ignoring the context of antiquity leads

us to misinterpret the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Since there were several similar stories in the ancient Mediterranean from an area as geographically diverse as Egypt, Greece, and Palestine, it will do us well to take the time to look at some similar stories. In this chapter, the researcher will look at similar stories to see how they can inform us with regard to how similar stories constructed social identities in Luke's day. This chapter will introduce similar stories, examine their themes, the social identities of characters in the story, and the way reversal of fortune worked in similar stories.

One function of this chapter is to show that social identity is a legitimate lens throught which to interpret Lazarus and the Rich Man. A full analysis of the parable and parallels could form an entire study on its own. For this reason, after the overview, the researcher will limit the discussion to aspects that are significant to social identity and Lazarus and the Rich Man.

The chapter will begin with a general overview of the parables and then will discuss how the parallels relate to social identity in Lazarus and the Rich Man.

## 3.1. Misleading use of parallels?

Bauckham (1998a:97) argues that looking at the parallels can be done in ways that are misleading and cautions against misleading conclusions coming from misinterpretations of the relationship between Lazarus and the Rich Man and contemporary parallels. For example, referring to Egyptian parallels (which will be discussed below), he argues that these parallels have been misused, as commentators have sought to use these parallels to suit their own theology, namely to suggest that Luke was not inherently opposed to income inequality (Bauckham 1998a:102).

Stigall (2015:542-554) has looked at similar stories and concluded that the Parable was intended to teach that the Law and the Prophets were still in effect. He notes that there are several parallels to themes of the parable in Greco-Roman literature: they all have locations (Paradise and a place of torment), they all have geography (such as a river or chasm separating the characters), and a similar essential plot (the characters always live in an afterlife, people who are alive at the beginning travel to the world of the dead in the story) (Stigall 2015:552).

Despite the similarites, Stigall views the differences as the important points to note when interpreting the parable. The fact that Luke has added in details of an afterlife means that he is attributing eschatological significance to the obedience to the Law and the Prophets (Stigall 2015:553). The fact that Luke has placed this parable directly after Jesus chastises the Pharisees (who function as representatives of the ruling elite in Luke's narrative) for excessive focus on monetary wealth also suggests that Luke is chastising the Jewish authorities for focusing on money to the exclusion of the Law and the Prophets (Stigall 2015:553; see also Moxnes 1988:8-9, 17-21).

With reference to the Rich Man's request that Lazarus be raised from the dead and sent to his brothers to warn them of their impending fate, Abraham refuses the request, saying that the Law and the Prophets should suffice to bring the Rich Man's relatives to repentance. According to Stigall (2015:554), the parable is using this motif to say that the Law and the Prophets' witness is strong enough not to need a miraculous event, like a resurrection, to take place in order to be vindicated. The Law and the Prophets are, according to Luke, enough evidence by their own merit and due to their being the Law of YHWH.

What Stigall's essay shows us is that there is use in examining ancient parallel stories to Lazarus and the Rich Man. While most of the parallels are of Gentile origin, similar stories help to let us know what the intent was when telling such stories. His essay also shows us that it is possible to apply these stories of Gentile origin to the story which, in the context of the Lukan narrative, was told by a Jew to other Jews;t can lead us to a proper interpretation within a Jewish context. We can see that other stories were used to teach similar lessons, and we can analyse the differences to see what the story meant in a Jewish context.

## 3.2. Lazarus and Greco-Roman parallels

Hock argues that Greco-Roman parallels should not be left out when considering the meaning of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Hock 1987:447-463). For instance, he argues that, when depending on the view that other Ancient Near Eastern folktales are behind the parable, only the first half of the parable is accounted for, and justice is not done to the second half of the parable (Hock 1987:450-452). Moreover, he views the use of Ancient Near Eastern folktales as inefficient because these tales do not explain the reversal of fortune that exists in the second half of the parable, arguing that it is too vague to say merely that those who live a moral life now will find themselves blessed in the afterlife while those who live an immoral life now will not find themselves in torment in eternity (Hock 1987:452-453).

To the researcher's mind, Hock makes a convincing argument that we should look at Greco-Roman stories to find, at least in part, inspiration for the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. While the researcher is convinced that Luke was friendly to Judaism and was possibly even Jewish himself, this in no way contradicts the fact that Greco-Roman stories known to Luke may have influenced the way in which Luke composed the parable. In fact, some of the parallels found in Greco-Roman stories are quite striking, and so it would make sense that such parallels are used when interpreting Lazarus and the Rich Man.

For a Greco-Roman parallel, the researcher will discuss the *Cataplus* by Lucian of Samosata (the

researcher has chosen to spend more space discussing this story than others because the themes of the other stories contain largely the same themes and the same limitations when applied to the study of Luke). In this story, there is a reversal of fates in that the tyrant, Megapenthes, ultimately ends up not doing well in the afterlife while a poor cobbler, Micyllus, ends up in a blessed state, with no marks of sin on his person.

The dialogue opens with a discussion between Clotho and Charon, and then Hermes joins them and explains that Megapenthes the tyrant tried to evade capture, hoping to be allowed to live longer (Lucian *Cataplus* 1-4). When he has finally been caught, he begs for another chance to live, hoping to be allowed to leave and return to his home where he lived in luxury, while promising that he will return of his own choosing when he has taken care of business (Lucian *Cataplus* 8). Clotho (one of the three fates of Greek mythology: the one who spins the wheel of fate while the others draw and cut), as would be expected, denies this request. Megapenthes has vast amounts of wealth, and he pledges to leave 250,000 sterling as collateral if he is allowed to return at a later time (Lucian *Cataplus* 9). He begs for five days to complete the building of docks he has commissioned and is denied; he then begs to be allowed to complete the conquest of Persia, conquer the city of Lydia and force them to pay tribute, build a giant monument for his remembrance, and be allowed to inscribe his military achievements so that future generations can remember his greatness, and he is of course denied this privilege (Lucian *Cataplus* 9). He is now away from his earthly achievements, and will not be able to look upon them again. After he has stood on his title of *tyrannos* to demand his "rights", he is told that he will face the stick of the cynic (Lucian *Cataplus* 13).

Cyniscus, the cynic, passes the test to be allowed into the Isles of the Blest (Lucian *Cataplus* 24). Since a man's misdeeds are branded on his soul, Cyniscus is required to show his soul to Rhadamanthus (a former mythological king who became a judge in the underworld) so he can inspect it for such brands (Lucian *Cataplus* 24). Small brands are revealed, and this lets Rhadamanthus know that he sinned in the early stage of his life but has turned his life around, and through the study of philosophy, he has removed the former brands almost entirely (Lucian *Cataplus* 24).

Finally, there is the character of the cobbler, Micyllus. This character serves to represent the character which is the exact opposite of Megapenthes. No-one so much as notices him before they are taken across the River Lethe to the Underworld, and he has to speak up to be noticed, with Clotho even having to ask who he is (Lucian *Cataplus* 14). He explains that he lived as a cobbler; he lived neither a live of starvation nor a life of luxury. He was a day-labourer who performed the task of making and repairing shoes; he could still afford to eat but not to have the best food (Lucian *Cataplus* 14-15). He has vivid memories of Megapenthes because he remembers the way that Megapenthes believed himself

to be more important than anyone else; and he remembers that he used to live in luxury while he felt lucky to eat even what the rich considered distasteful (Lucian *Cataplus* 14-17).

Significantly, a difference in mindset is shown between Megapenthes and Micyllus. Micyllus discusses the clothes that Megapenthes wore, describing the purple clothes, and talks about smelling the luxury meats from Megapenthes' feasts (Lucian *Cataplus* 14-15). As a "working class" cobbler, he could only expect such luxuries during a city-wide celebration in which a sacrifice occurred, whereas Megapenthes could go to his flock to get a sheep whenever he felt like eating one. During his life, Micyllus longed for such luxury, and did not particularly enjoy his work as a cobbler. While the rest of the characters are mourning their losses while crossing the River Lethe into Hades, Micyllus laments nothing; he has no need to lament as he had no gains over which to lament the loss (Lucian *Cataplus* 20). He therefore settles on a sarcastic "lamentation" over losing things that he actually hated. This contrasts strongly with the mood of Megapenthes, which has been discussed earlier in this section. Megapenthes mourned the loss of his earthly possessions and title, as he had much to lose. In death he was no longer the powerful man that he was in life; Micyllus no longer lacked the power that Megapenthes had. Micyllus was therefore more content to leave his earthly life behind and go on into Hades.

At the judgment, the results to an extent parallel what is told in Lazarus and the Rich Man. As discussed above, the Cynic has repented of his misdeeds, and his later life devoted to philosophy covered up nearly all the marks that his misdeeds had left upon his soul. Such was not the case for either Megapenthes or Micyllus: neither of their misdeeds were covered up by subsequent repentance by philosophy. When Megapenthes bares his soul to Rhadamanthus, he humorously remarks: "Good gracious, the man's a positive network!" (Lucian *Cataplus* 28). In other words, Megapenthes' "sins" were so many that he was hardly recognisable as human soul; he had committed so much evil in his life that the marks on his soul appeared as the road network on a map! The fate of Micyllus, however, is far more pleasant. Initially, as was the case before crossing the river, Rhadamanthus does not even know who Micyllus is; Micyllus has to speak up for himself and explain to Rhadamanthus who he is! (Lucian *Cataplus* 25). He also does not have a high view of himself; he tells Rhadamanthus that he will not take up much of his time in the judgement, while Megapenthes felt entitled to this judgement (Lucian *Cataplus* 25). After his soul is revealed to have no marks, he is told that he can follow Cyniscus to the Isles of the Blest (Lucian *Cataplus* 25).

According to Hock, the main point of the story is that there is a reversal of fate between rich and poor in the afterlife (Hock 1987:459). He sees that, as the Rich Man does with Abraham, Megapenthes attempts to bargain with Rhadamanthus, hoping that he will be granted his request to

achieve more in his earthly life (Hock 1987:459).

The significant difference, according to Hock, is that the *Cataplus* offers a reason for the reversal of fortunes. Micyllus had a quick judgement because there were no marks on his body, and it was easy to see that he had no "sin" as there were no marks; in the case of Megapenthes, the variety of marks meant there had to be testimony from Micyllus, Cyniscus, and even his bed and lamp (Hock 1987:459). While he did not actively treat the poor badly or directly steal anything from them, he has chosen to not to surround himself with people from their social circles. Among the charges were sexual offences, as Megapenthes was revealed to have slept with maidens to whom he was not married and to have slept with the wives of other men (Hock 1987:460). He believed that his social identity as a rich tyrant gave him the entitlement to commit such an act.

According to Bauckham (1998a:107), however, Hock has misused the parallels with the two stories to avoid the conclusion that Luke was condemning mere income inequality in Lazarus and the Rich Man. He argues against Hock's conclusion that wealth was the precursor to hedonism, which Hock views as an important theme in Lazarus and the Rich Man based on his understanding the parallels in the *Cataplus*; he avoids the plain conclusion found in Luke 16:25 in Bauckham's (1998a:107) opinion. Most importantly, in Bauckham's (1998a:107) view, Hock does not acknowledge that the parallels found in the *Cataplus* do not contain any reference to the second part of the parable, and so they cannot be used to illuminate our understanding of the parable as a whole.

Lehtipuu (2007:173-174) argues that there is not even a reversal in Lucian's story because death functions as the great equaliser, not a place where retributive justice is given out. Megapenthes is "punished" in the sense that he loses the glory that he had in his lifetime, while Micyllus is happy to go into Hades because he has nothing to lose from his life on earth. Rather than having to suffer pain from eternal burning, Megapenthes is merely not allowed to drink from the water of Lethe; Megapenthes' great punishment is that he will remember what he has lost.

While the researcher does not think that Hock's argument should be discounted in its entirety, there is one potential flaw which should not be ignored. Luke's Gospel was written in the late first century, whereas Lucian was born around 125 CE. As such, one cannot say that Luke directly took the story from Lucian's work as the work did not exist before Luke wrote his Gospel. Hock also refers to another work of Lucian called *Gallus*, which has similar themes (Hock 1987:460). The problem with such a work remains the same: it had to have been written decades, perhaps even half a century, after Luke wrote his Gospel. Direct literary dependence therefore becomes an impossibility. While Hock also cites other authors, such as Philostratus, Theon of Alexandria, and Herogenes of Tarsus as evidence that stories similar to Lazarus and the Rich Man existed in Greco-Roman writings (Hock

1987:456), these all postdate Luke's Gospel, as these authors were all born after Luke had completed his Gospel. While these sources may still be useful for comparison to Lazarus and the Rich Man, and may tell us some things about the circles in which Luke was writing, a researcher using these sources for comparison needs to keep this in mind, and Hock has not devoted any space to justify using sources that postdate Lazarus and the Rich Man by at least a few decades. Since Hock seems to be auggesting that his work is somewhat ground-breaking, space should have been devoted to answering this question.

While Hock has not argued for the legitimacy of the use of these sources, the researcher is still of the view that it would be a mistake to discount these sources entirely as potential sources of information when dealing with Lazarus and the Rich Man. The story does appear to teach some of the widely held views about wealth from the Greco-Roman world (see chapter 2). The fact that, in form at least, the *Cataplus* does resemble similar stories from the Ancient Mediterranean shows that at least some of the elements of the story would have been in circulation. It would therefore appear that the contents of similar stories going around would have influenced the composition of the parable as it is found in Luke. Such would be speculative, but Luke may have perhaps influenced Lucian. While we cannot say for sure, Lucian does talk in another book about Jesus (Lucian *The Death of Peregrine* 11-12). It is possible that Lucian could have consulted Luke's Gospel for some of what he knew about Jesus and the early Christian movement. Given what Hock has shown to be numerous parallels between Lazarus and the Rich Man and the *Cataplus* (especially between Lazarus and Micyllus), it would be a mistake to rule out such influence.

Regardless of which way the literary dependence went, it does appear that there is reason to think that such stories intended to teach similar lessons. On a broader scale, they both tell the tale that the fortunes of rich and poor will be exchanged. The rich and powerful Megapenthes is reduced to a state of mere begging, hoping that Rhadamanthus will be merciful to him as the Rich Man does with Abraham; the former cobbler, seen as being of a lower status because of his work as a cobbler, is shown to have no sin on him and is given the right to go to the Isles of the Blest along with the Cynic philosopher.

A noticeable difference between the *Cataplus* and Lazarus and the Rich Man is that Micyllus is not depicted as a *ptochos* like Lazarus. Micyllus has a craft: he engages in shoe-making and repairs, which allows him to earn a living and put food in his belly, even if his earnings are meagre compared to those of Megapentes. Such is in stark contrast to Lazarus, who does not even get to eat the scraps of the

Rich Man's table. Lazarus is destitute, whereas the cobbler is still able to earn a living, even though he is still envious at the superior quality of the life lived by Megapenthes. In stark contrast to Lucian, Luke appears to embrace even the *ptochos* as a member of society. Megapenthes' offence appears to be linked to his grand ambition. He continued to amass wealth and power for himself without regard for others or for philosophy. He attempted to conquer several lands and have a statue erected in memory of himself. It would appear that Micyllus had no hope of attaining such honours.

What this means in terms of social identity is that Megapenthes viewed himself as having an elite social identity (the highest one available, *tyrannos*) which gave him the group entitlement to attempt to increase his power as much as he could (people of his status, in his view, had the right to increase their power). His in-group bias caused him to overlook and disassociate from people with a working-class social identity, such as Micyllus the cobbler.

What we see from Megapenthes and Micyllus is that even vast income inequality appears to be frowned upon in Lucian's story (not necessarily in Greco-Roman society as a whole). Megapenthes would not deign to help a cobbler such as Micyllus, and expected him to be content with the scraps that fell from his "table". Luke shows that the rich of Palestine are even worse than this, in that they refuse to allow that a *ptochos* even be allowed the scraps. After taking away the right of the *ptochos* even to earn a living, the Rich Man would not share anything with him. While Lucian's story is one that does overturn any notion that lower class workers should be considered lower than kings, it still does not elevate the status of people entirely shunned by society. Luke shows that our social identity is one that should not shun even those who are cast out of polite society altogether – a fate that would not befall even Micyllus. Otherwise, one is not acting in line with the expectations of one who has the social identity "child of Abraham" (to be discussed in chapter five). In short, Lucian's story does critique certain elements of society, but it does not delegitimise oppressive systems as a whole. Lucian's work is not opposed to someone having wealth (neither is Luke's parable) but appears to be against huge income inequality. It appears, in general, to be against a small group of people amassing great wealth for themselves while others lack the opportunity to do so while also acting entirely within their own self-interest.

In Lazarus and the Rich Man, Luke appears to be attacking oppressive systems as a whole. While in Lucian's story Megapenthes does not appear to have taken away Micyllus' livelihood by taking over his land or similar activity, the Rich Man was most likely involved in such an activity when he dealt with Lazarus. As far as Luke is concerned, people of all classes should have a place in society. There should not be a class of *ptochoi* who are left out to starve while a rich class is well-fed; there also

should not be a class which is left out of fellowship with all people while a rich class has fellowship with each other. In other words, as far as Luke is concerned, there should not be a caste system in which some are left out of society because they are considered "untouchables" or anything similar to that. Those who practice such things will not find themselves welcome as "children of Abraham" (a concept that will be discussed in chapter five).

## 3.3. Si-Osiris and Setme

A story that has been often appealed to when looking for parallels to Lazarus and the Rich Man is the story of Setme and Si-Osiris, a story of a journey to the Underworld in Egyptian mythology (Crossan 1973:67; Noland 1993:826-827; Jeremias 1954:128). This story likewise deals with the concepts of wealth and poverty, as well as the fate of those who live in such conditions. The tale is also Middle Eastern in origin, potentially making it a more likely candidate for parallels to a story told in a Palestinian context.

In the tale, the wife of Setme gives birth to a child called Si-Osiris, who also turns out to be an incarnation of Horus (Bauckham 1998a:98; Massey 1907:535). He defeated the Ethiopian magician at the age of twelve, and was then due to return to Amente (the world of the dead); this, however, was not to be the case immediately, as he was first due to give a father and son a tour of Amente to show them the difference between the fates of the rich and the poor (Bauckham 1998a:98). The father wished to experience the fate of the rich man, and so he needed to shown the fate of the rich man in Amente in order to be warned of his fate after death and prevent himself from having the same fate (Bauckham 1998a:98). When he descends into Amente, he is soon shocked to see that the rich man does not receive the favour of Osiris. Instead, he is one of the people whose bad deeds outweigh his good deeds, and so, like the Rich Man in Luke 16:19-31, he is not relegated to a pleasant afterlife (Bauckham 1998a:98). The poor man's good deeds outweigh his bad deeds, and so he is given Osiris' favour and a more pleasant afterlife (Bauckham 1998a:98).

According to Crossan, what is striking about Lazarus and the Rich Man, "especially against this background, is Jesus' omission of any moral preparation for the reversal or any ethical judgment on the earthly state of the participants." (Crossan 1973:67). As he goes on, however, he appears to contradict himself. He says that "Jesus was not interested in moral admonition on the dangers of riches...but in the reversal; of human situation" in which the coming of the Kingdom would render those who were rich poor and the poor rich (Crossan 1973:68). He appears to be stating that Jesus does not condemn wealth

as a whole but rather the way in which wealth is misused and hoarded at the expense of others or at least not used to benefit those who do are down on their luck in society. To the researcher's mind, this appears to be a moral sentiment, as it appears to be a moral critique of a system in which those who are rich get richer at the expense of those who are not rich and are subsequently forced to beg at the gates of the rich. It is, however, less explicit in Lazarus and the Rich Man.

As will be discussed in chapter 4, Luke sets up his Gospel by showing that those in power will not be in power forever. Luke contrasts the status of Augustus and Jesus by having Augustus order a census across the entire Roman Empire, while Jesus is born in a manger because there is no room available in the inn. Augustus appears to have power, but Jesus appears to have no power. This is a constant theme in Luke's Gospel. The story of Lazarus and the Rich Man is no exception to this theme. In keeping continuity with the Lukan narrative, Lazarus and the Rich Man has a similar theme. As discussed in the previous chapter, it often occurred that those who became wealthy obtained their wealth at the expense of others. Luke shows in this parable that such an act is immoral by having the Rich Man end up away from Abraham while Lazarus gets to be in Abraham's bosom. The moral, broadly, is that the rich and powerful, especially those who obtain their wealth at the expense of others whoare left destitute, will one day get their just desserts. Those who were deprived under the hand of the rich and powerful will one day have the position that was denied them by the rich when the Kingdom of God arrives. Crossan's argument therefore lacks persuasive power as it ignores the literary evidence in Luke's Gospel to the contrary.

What the story of Setme and Si-Osiris has that the Greco-Roman parallels lack is that it dates back to approximately the same time period as Luke (Bauckham 1998a:97). While the written version of the story was most likely compiled in the middle of the first century, it describes Setme Khamuas, who was a priest in the thirteenth century BCE. This suggests that oral versions of the tale would have been circulating for some time before it was written down and before Luke put pen to paper to write his Gospel (Bauckham 1998a:97). Even if there were no previous traditions on which this story was based, it still seems to be a good candidate to compare with Lazarus and the Rich Man as it appears to have been completed at approximately the same time Luke wrote his Gospel.

Jeremias notes that both the story of Setme and Si-Osiris and Lazarus and the Rich Man present a funeral with much pomp for the rich man of the story (Jeremias 1954:129). Even in death, it appears that the rich man is doing well, as even his corpse is given great honour. However, in both cases the soul of the rich man is enduring torment in the afterlife.

As is the case with both the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man and the story of Setme and Si-Osiris, there is a reversal in which the poor person ends up receiving a better afterlife than the rich person. However, the Egyptian story appears to match the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man more closely than Megapenthes and Micyllus as in both cases, the poor man is without income.

A significant difference between Setme and Si-Osiris and the other stories is that in this story, the rich man is allowed to return to the land of the living. He is not doomed to the fate of Megapenthes or the Rich Man; he is allowed back into the land of the living and is allowed the opportunity to choose to live a life in which he can live morally. He has a chance to gain enough good deeds for his good deeds to outweigh his bad deeds, and this would ultimately allow him into the blessed afterlife. By having Abraham tell the Rich Man that this is not possible (Luke 16:29, 31), Luke appears to be saying that the elite class will not have such an opportunity; when YHWH's Kingdom arrives, it will be too late.

## 3.4. Bar Mayan

Finally, the researcher will discuss a similar story told in a Jewish setting. In the Rabbinic texts, the story is told of a poor scholar by the name of Bar Mayan, who ends up living a better afterlife than his richer peer, who forsook study of Torah.

As with the Greek texts, there is the potential pitfall that the Rabbinic texts were written after the time of Luke, post-dating his work by at least a century. However, in light of the fact that we have seen similar stories going around in this time, and the fact that it is likely that such stories were going around even before this (see above in the discussion of Setme and Si-Osiris), it would appear that the stories were based on themes that were common. In the researcher's view, we can use them for studying the New Testament.

While the researcher will not go into much detail in discussing the question of the feasibility of using Rabbinic sources for studying the New Testament (space for such a discussion is lacking for our purposes here), the researcher will touch on the subject. Kister and Wold, for instance, have argued that they should most certainly be used when studying the New Testament (Kister and Wold 2018:5-28). They have noted that some of the parables of Jesus have philological links to Rabbinic parables (Kister and Wold 2018:6). As examples of similar phraseology, they use statements such as “But many who are first will be last, and the last first” (Matthew 19:30//Mark 10:31) and “he who is least among you all will be great” (Luke 9:48) (Kister and Wold 2018:7). They deal in detail with three parables, and the researcher will mention only their dealings with the parable of the neighbour arriving at midnight to ask

for bread in Luke 11:5-8). They note that the Greek word *anaidea* refers to shame and does not have a good connotation; this makes the parable puzzling as it seems to suggest that acting "shamefully" is the way to get YHWH's attention and get him to answer prayers (Kister and Wold 2018:16). They go on to note that there is a similar usage of a Hebrew equivalent in the original Hebrew of Ben Sira found in the Masada Scroll (Kister and Wold 2018:16). They go on to say that the Hebrew equivalent is used in a Rabbinic utterance of Rabbi Shim to represent persistence and importunance in prayer rather than a sort of rudeness or shamefulness associated with the Greek word *anaidea*. (Kister and Wold 2018:19). In short, Kister and Wold have shown that Rabbinic Texts can be useful when interpreting the New Testament. There are links in phraseology between the two that seem to be best explained by traditions pre-dating the writing of the actual Rabbinic manuscripts. While we may not have the exact wording of the Rabbis, we do have their ideas preserved in the Rabbinic texts.

Cohen (2006:206) also cautions against using too close a reading of Rabbinic texts as a comparison to the New Testament, as the Rabbis, while having largely similar views, did not hold identical views on every topic. Rabbis had their own interests and agenda; each Rabbi had his individual interest and agendum. Cohen (2006:216-220) goes on to suggest that sectarianism among Judaism ended after the war against the Romans of 66-70 CE. However, he accepts the notion that the group referred to as "Pharisees" in the Gospels was linked to the group latter known as the "Rabbis", as , for example, the House of Gamaliel links the Rabbis and the Pharisees (Cohen 2006:218). Furthermore, he references the fact that the Pharisees are portrayed as victors against the Sadducees and that the Pharisees are not described as a sect in Rabbinic texts while theSadducess are (Cohen 2006:148-152). While he cautions readers to avoid assuming that the Rabbis and pre-70 CE Pharisees agreed on every detail, it appears justified to use them as a general reference point for understanding Pharisaism of this period.

Based on the above analyses, it appears justified to use the texts as a general guide to the beliefs of the Pharisees. There are philological links, as indicated by Kister and World (2018). The groups are linked by the House of Gamaliel, and the Pharisees are described as victors against the Sadducees, as indicated by Cohen (2006). It therefore appears reasonable to use Rabbinic texts as a general guide to Pharisaic beliefs, with the added caution against using a single text as a proof-text.

Specifically in the case of Lazarus and the Rich Man, the use of such sources appears justified because similar stories based on similar themes were told before pen was put to paper in the Rabbinic texts. While we may dispute whether the Rabbinic texts represent the exact wording of older Rabbis they quote, they do appear to contain a kernel of similarity in them.

In the story of Bar Mayan, a rich man, named Bar Mayan, dies at the same time that a poor Torah scholar dies. While the poor Torah scholar has endured a difficult life, and even had a poor funeral as a reminder of the lowly state of his earthly life, Bar Mayan has lived well and has been given a burial in which there is a reminder of the high quality of life he led in his earthly life (Papaioannou 2013:116-117). Here it seems that the one studying Torah has been left in a desolate state while a rich man, who cared nothing for God's Torah, receives all the blessings associated with following God. Of course, it appears that way only in the earthly life. While it appeared that the poor Torah scholar received little for his efforts in studying the Torah, he had actually atoned for his sins by doing so, and there is therefore no record of sin for the Torah scholar as his record is wiped clean (Papaioannou 2013:117). There is no such atonement for Bar Mayan; he had committed many sins and for these sins he would be punished in the afterlife, thus rendering all he had gained in his earthly life worthless (Papaioannou 2013:116-117).

## 3.5. Application to Lazarus and the Rich Man and social identity

This section will answer the question of how the use of parallels helps us to learn what Luke is teaching about social identity in the parable. It was noted above in section 3.1. that parallels have been misused in an attempt to avoid having the parable teach something that commentators have found unpalatable. Lehtipuu's view that parallels have been used to avoid the issue of the nature of the afterlife will not be addressed in great detail; this thesis describes social identity, so this chapter will focus on how the parallels inform us about social identity as taught in Luke's parable.

### 3.5.1. In-group bias

As discussed in chapter two, Luke's society was more collectivistic than individualistic. In other words, the community as a whole meant more than the individual. Each individual belonged to a group, and the individual would bring honour or shame to the group depending on how they acted. Within the group, each individual would experience in-group bias favouring their own group.

Megapenthes the Tyrant was biased in favour of tyrants. He believed that he was one, and this helped him understand himself in relation to his world. He believed that his position should be favoured, and so he conquered in order to show this.

Setme from the Egyptian parallel and Bar Mayan the rich tax collector from the Rabbinic parallel similarly show an in-group bias in favour of people with a high amount of wealth. They believe that their own groups are favoured, as revealed by the fact that Setme expects one from his group to have a pleasant afterlife as a result of being in a favoured group while Bar Mayan shows a bias in favour of richer people by initially inviting people from this group to his feast.

Similarly, in Lazarus and the Rich Man, the Rich Man has an in-group bias to the rich and others of similar socio-economic status. For this reason, he chose to associate only with them and not with a *ptochos* like Lazarus.

A difference between Lazarus and Mycillus is that Lazarus does not expect anything from his being poor; in fact, he does not even speak. Micyllus the cobbler, on the other hand, speaks to make sure that he is known to Rhadamanthus. He reveals in-group bias to those of low social status by expecting to go to the Isles of the Blest as a result of being part of the group "poor".

### 3.5.2. Group entitlements

Micyllus the cobbler had the social identity of "poor" (a working-class man). In his earthly life, he would have believed that such an identity did not come with many group entitlements because he did not have access to as much as Megapenthes. Since sons tended to take on the work of their fathers, he would be stuck in this social identity for his entire life; he would not have the group entitlement of being allowed to rise through the ranks and attain riches or conquests. His social identity gave him the group entitlement of having enough only to subsist.

Megapenthes, of course, would have been of royal descent, and would therefore have believed himself to be entitled to the related group entitlements, namely the throne and the right to conquest. We see this in the *Cataplus*, where he wishes to go back to earth to conquer Persia (Lucian *Cataplus* 9). He believes himself entitled to these group entitlements as a result of having the social identity of "tyrant" or being of "royal lineage".

Setme similarly believed that the wealthy had the group entitlement of luxury. He saw a rich man's funeral and wished to have a similar one himself. He believed that those who had the social identity of "rich" were entitled to high honour, even to the extent that they were treated well in death. He is of course shown that this is not the case, as those who believe that they have the social identity of "rich" and the associated entitlements are shown not to have them in reality; they do not end up in the realms of the blessed.

### 3.5.3. Economic status and social identity

What we have seen in the parallels is that socio-economic status was connected to social identity. Those with material wealth and a high honour status held in-group biases towards others with much material wealth. This did not result in overt hostility to those in other groups, but it did often mean that they neglected them. This manifests itself in the story of Mycillus and Megapenthes: Megapenthes the Tyrant did not feel overt hostility towards Micyllus the cobbler, but he did neglect

him and his needs, acting in such a way as to show that his social identity was one which he believed gave him the group entitlement of neglecting those he thought beneath him. This creates a social "chasm" similar to the one found in Lazarus and the Rich Man between Abraham and the Rich Man. In other words, they believed, among other things, that their identity as "rich" or as a "person of power" gave them the group entitlement of disassociating with those they believed to be beneath them, and they are shown not to have this identity in reality as they are excluded from the blessed places in the afterlife.

### 3.5. Concluding Summary

As we have seen in this chapter, stories similar to Lazarus and the Rich Man were told quite widely in the Mediterranean. As we have seen by the application of social identity to these passages, social identity is a legitimate lens through which to view such stories. The social identites, along with the in-group biases and group entitlements, that the characters of the story thought they had did not turn out to be the ones they actually held. Characters in these stories thought they had high-status social identities when they actually did not and vice versa. This was revealed by the reversal of social identities in the afterlives.

# Chapter Four - The Significance of Moses and the Prophets in Lazarus and the Rich Man

While in agony, the Rich Man cries out to Abraham, asking him to send Lazarus to warn his

living brothers to repent lest they share in his torment. Abraham responds by saying "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." (Luke 16:29). At a first glance, this certainly appears to be a noble sentiment on the part of the Rich Man. One might assume that the Rich Man has repented and now cares about other people, as he, knowing that he cannot get himself out, thinks it best at least to warn his brothers lest they join him. However, the fact that he tells Abraham to "send Lazarus" (16:27) shows that he has not done so; he still views himself as Lazarus' superior, with the authority to give orders to Lazarus despite never having been his master. He ignores the fact that Lazarus is feasting sumptuously in the place that he expected to be. He ignores the fact that Abraham has revealed that Lazarus, the "defected" one, is the one who is seated with Abraham while he is cast out.

Luke here associates Lazarus with Moses and the prophets, a designation that his readers would presumably have thought belonged to the Rich Man, with perhaps some of his more wealthy readers being unsure how to act with their wealth according to Christian principles. The Rich Man has been associated with a place previously thought only to belong to Gentiles and Israelites who were "sinners" or "defective" in some way, with some reserving such a position merely for Gentiles. Luke has here raised the question of what it means to be an "Israelite" or "child of Abraham". What does it mean to be a "child of Abraham"? Is it enough to be born an Israelite? Or is there more to it?

In this section, the researcher will look at the Lukan view of Israel and Jesus as the one who was to restore Israel. Jesus, according to Luke, raised questions of what it really meant to be an Israelite, arguing that his opponents had missed the mark. Members of the elite class, who engaged in acts that often dispossessed people and left them destitute, were not in fact members of the Kingdom of God. Neither being a natural-born Israelite nor being a member of the Israelite diaspora made one a member of the Kingdom. One would have to live a life in which it showed that they had repented, and continue to do so for all their days. The fruits of repentance would include looking after those in their midst who had lost their livelihood, taking care to avoid neglecting the provision of daily bread for members of the Kingdom.

The social identity of "Israelite", which entailed being in line with the Law and the Prophets, was an important social identity for Israelites, as this social identity was believed by them to give them a social identity of being the people set apart by God himself and therefore entitled to the benefits of being covenant partners of God (this will be discussed more fully in this chapter and the next one). It is therefore important to understand what Luke is saying in Lazarus and the Rich Man about a person's identity as a member of the nation with whom God had made a covenant.

Since this theme takes an important place in Luke's writings, the researcher has decided to devote a chapter to it. While some of the information could belong to chapter two, the researcher has

chosen to devote a new chapter to it as it describes the attitudes to different social classes as found in the Old Testament, while chapter two is intended to give a general socio-economic background without using the Old Testament.

The status of the Law and the Prophets is used in the process of characterisation of the characters of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke uses them in telling us about the characters: he uses it to answer questions about the natures of the characters, the morality of the characters, and of course the social identity of the characters. He also uses the characters to represent real people without direct confrontation (see the note on "characterisation" in chapter one). Therefore, in analysing Luke's characterisation, we get to see which social identities the characters in the story hold and thee reversal of social identities that Luke portrays in the parable.

This chapter will begin by discussing the significance of "Moses and the prophets" in Lazarus and the Rich Man and will then go wider. The findings discussed here will then be analysed in terms of what they can tell us about social identity in Lazarus and the Rich Man.

## 4.1. Parallels with Job in Lazarus and the rich man

In the book of Job, Job is presented as one who suffers and is therefore blessed by God for patiently enduring his suffering. Yoder notices parallels between the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man and the story of Job (Yoder 2019:4-7). Contrary to what may be thought by a Marxist interpreter of the parable, Job is a rich man and yet is presented as being righteous (*amemptos*) while also being a rich man, owning much land and several thousand livestock (Yoder 2019:5). Contrary to the Rich Man, however, Job gives generously to those who are in need (Yoder 2019:5). While the Rich Man has Lazarus right on his doorstep, he continues to live comfortably in his own estate while Lazarus suffers in anguish hoping for a morsel from his table. Job refused to allow his compatriots to go without food, ensuring that they were all provided for with daily necessities.

According to Yoder, the linguistic similarities between Job and Lazarus and the Rich Man are significant. For instance, this is one of three occasions in Luke where the phrase *anthropos tis* is used (the other occasions being Luke 15:11, the parable of the prodigal son; and Luke 16:1, in which Luke introduces the parable of the shrewd steward) (Yoder 2019:4). Both of these are cases where wealth is the subject of discussion. He notes that there are only two instances in which the LXX introduces the story with the formula: Job's introduction in *Job* and Daniel's introduction in *Bel and the Dragon* (Yoder 2019:4). He focusses on the use of the formula to introduce Job as the focus of this parable on wealth, and Job appears to be an example of how one entrusted with great wealth should use one's wealth: for the service of those around them who do not have access to daily necessities.

When Job was being tested by the devil, he was struck with sores, and this is similar to the way in which Lazarus was struck with sores while sitting outside the Rich Man's gate (Yoder 2019:6). While in this condition, Job often thought about dying and ending up in Hades (Job 21:13 LXX), and the Rich Man actually ends up in Hades (Luke 16:23) (Yoder 2019:6).

The Rich Man often had celebratory events (Luke 16:19); Job likewise had much to eat, and his children enjoyed sumptuous feasts with their father (Job 1:4) (Yoder 2019:6). While it would appear that both wore fancy clothes, Luke describes the Rich Man wearing purple (16:19), whereas Job is described as being dressed with "righteousness" (Job 29:14) (Yoder 2019:6). In other words, wealth is not inherently destructive: if one does not idolatrously hold onto wealth while refusing to help those who are in need, one can be righteous while still spending much on oneself.

Yoder further mentions that it is possible that Luke used the *Testament of Job* while writing this parable. According to this parable, Job daily placed sixty tables near his residence in order to feed people who were short of daily necessities (Testament of Job 32:7) and another thirty to feed strangers (Testament of Job 10:1) (Yoder 2019:7). Furthermore, there may be a link between this text and the dogs described in Lazarus and the Rich Man, as the *Testament of Job* describes Job as having two hundred dogs guarding his home (Testament of Job 9:3) (Yoder 2019:7). However, while agreeing that perhaps some of the traditions which ultimately made the *Testament of Job* into the complete text that it became were around during Luke's day, Yoder acknowledges that the text may not have been written in full during the first century, thus limiting any connection to Luke's Gospel (Yoder 2019:7).

The researcher has found Yoder's work largely convincing. It shines light on reasons why the imagery of "Moses and the Prophets" was chosen, and helps explain its significance in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man in terms of Luke's characterisation of the characters. Such an explanation also helps to explain literary links in the parables, showing how the parable functions as a unit. It is therefore unnecessary to regard the parable as being divided into two distinct parts and eliminates the need to view the second part as a legendary accretion to the first "authentic" section. It also refutes Crossan's argument that there is no reason in the parable for the Rich Man being in Hades (Crossan 1973:66-67). We see from the references to the *Testament of Job* that Job the righteous man used his wealth to feed those around him. He also included them in social life by providing tables for them to have fellowship with each other while feeding themselves. In other words, Job did not embrace a social identity which led him to exclude others based on socio-economic factors.
The Rich Man did exactly this. It is because he did this that the Rich Man ends up being tormented in Hades.

In Luke 16:27-31, the Rich Man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his family. He wants his

brothers to be warned of their impending fate, and he hopes that by Lazarus' resurrection and preaching they will be convinced to repent. Abraham initially dismisses his request, saying that "they have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." (Luke 16:29). After another pleading statement from the Rich Man, Abraham says that, if they refuse to listen to the words of Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced to repent even if someone rises from the dead and speaks to them (Luke 16:30-31).

The question that must now be asked is: why did Luke make reference to the Law and the Prophets? Specifically, how does the Rich Man violate Moses and the Prophets? Why is he not considered to be on the side of the prophets while Lazarus is?

As is often stated, Luke is a theologian with a concern for the poor. Several of his parables and narratives indicate as much, such as the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21), the parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32), and the occasion in which the widow put two mites in the Temple treasury while the rich were putting in excessive gold (21:1-4). It would stand to reason, therefore, that at least part of what Luke is saying is that people who have repented, and are therefore part of the "true" Israel, will show evidence of this by caring for the poor.

## 4.2. Moses and the prophets in Luke's writings

### 4.2.1. Luke and the Temple

This chapter's analysis will begin by looking at how Luke viewed the Jerusalem Temple (from here "the Temple"). This building was the centre of Jewish activity in Jesus' day and had probably been destroyed by Luke's day. The researcher has chosen to include an analysis of the Temple, as much of Jewish religion took place there. When sacrifices had to be made, they were made in the Temple. When people gathered yearly for the Passover, they gathered at Jerusalem because this was the city in which the Temple was located.

While the parable itself does not mention the Temple, the researcher has chosen to discuss briefly Luke's understanding of the Temple as it was a central symbol of contemporary Judaisms, and the parable does consider the question of what it means to be an "Israelite". It is therefore relevant to the idea of being in line with the "Law and the Prophets". However, since it is not part of the parable itself, it will be kept brief.

### 4.2.2. A negative view of the Temple?

At first glance, several Lukan texts seem to suggest that Luke takes a negative view of the Temple. In Luke 19:41-48, for instance, Jesus drives out the people selling animals to be sacrificed and compares them to idolators. He pronounces doom on the people, as they have not repented (Luke

19:44). He goes on to refer to Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, which refer to the people of Israel worshipping Baal; in context, these verses are talking about God drawing in Gentiles to become his people along with Israel. The place where they were selling sacrificial animals was in the section of the Temple in which Gentiles were supposed to worship, and this suggests that Jesus is accusing the Temple establishment of being idolatrous by not including Gentiles.

Smith draws attention to the world *lestes* in its use by Jesus in the Temple. He draws attention to ancient texts in which it was said that corruption in the Temple was common, such as some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Testament of Moses (Smith 2017:74; see also Wright 1992:418). It appears here that Luke uses the word *lestai* to make the case that the Temple establishment of his day does not hold the identity of "Israelite". In short, Luke does not hold an inherently negative view of the Temple but views it as corrupted.

Jesus also predicts the destruction of the Temple in Luke 21. Smith makes reference to Old Testament texts to make the case that Jesus is implying that he will die a prophet's death (Smith uses the Septuagintal references when citing Old Testament verses. When referring to Smith's work, the researcher will likewise use the LXX reference. Otherwise, the researcher will use the reference from the Masoretic Text). He references the following texts: Jeremiah 2:30, 33:20-23 (26:20-23 ET), and 45:4-6 (38:4-6 ET); Nehemiah 9:26; Psalms 35:8, 56:2, 60:5, 90:4; Deuteronomy 32:11; and Isaiah 35:1; as well as others (Smith 2017:35-42). Broadly, what this tells us is that Jesus is describing himself in ways reminiscent of an Old Testament prophet; he has criticised the Temple establishment in ways similar to the prophets of old, and so he has therefore died like the prophets of old.

### 4.2.3. Temple Application to Lazarus and the Rich Man

It is likely that Lazarus would not have been allowed at the Temple, while the Rich Man would have been allowed. The centre of religious life allowed the Rich Man in but did not allow access to Lazarus. Lazarus would have been considered unclean, as he had sores all over his body. The Rich Man avoided such uncleanness by keeping away from Lazarus and his canine "friends".

As discussed above, Jesus drove sellers out of the Temple. Based on the Old Testament quotations, it appears that the people in the Temple are not allowing Gentiles to worship there as they are selling in the area in which Gentiles worship. The Isaianic reference also seems to be suggesting that Jesus is accusing the Temple establishment of idolatry, as they trust in their own wealth and nationality rather than God.

Such an establishment had no place for Lazarus. It would seem that Lazarus was treated by the Rich Man like a Gentile at the Temple. The Rich Man acted in a way similar to the Temple

establishment as he refused Lazarus entry into his community and also excluded Lazarus from worship in the central religious place of several Judaisms.

In Acts 7:37, there is an allusion to Deuteronomy 18:35. Here it is said that another prophet like Moses will rise up, and Luke believes that this prophet is Jesus. It is safe to say that, whatever Luke's view of specific laws, he holds a high view of the Old Testament and its writers. He views Jesus as being in continuity with them. He views acceptance of Jesus as Messiah as almost a new way of following the Torah, as Jesus has filled the Messianic role described therein according to Luke.

What this entailsis that Luke is giving Lazarus a place as a member of the people of Moses and the prophets, as well as the grouo benefits associated with this group. In the parable, Jesus says that "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). Luke is saying that, by acting in ways contrary to the Law of Moses, the Rich Man's Israelite nationality is not enough to save him. He is shown not to be a member of the people of God. Lazarus, who was thought not to be a member of the people of God because of his perceived "uncleanness", is in fact a member of the people of God.

Lazarus has rightly grasped what it means to be a member of the people of God. As his name indicates, he has abandoned trusting in the idols of the Temple establishment and has chosen to trust in God (Lazarus means "God helps").

### 4.2.3. Old Testament references to wealth and poverty

As has been discussed in chapter two, in several cases, people who were *ptochoi* had their land taken from them by the elite, who profited off the land from which they drove out former owners who would use it to eke out a living. Such passages are worth looking at in the books of Moses and the Prophets.

The researcher has decided to place this section in this chapter rather than chapter two (background information) because this section deals with the question in terms of the Law and the Prophets. Chapter two deals largely with the question of the understandings of "rich" and "poor" in general in the ancient Mediterranean; this section takes that information and asks how the Law and the Prophets deal with this question. It is therefore added in here.

When discussing the consequences of killing or harming an animal belonging to another person, Leviticus 24:22 states that the same law, that the person who killed the animal must restore it to its owner, applies to both Israelites and foreigners. In Leviticus 19:34, the writer tells the reader that "The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you" ( Leviticus 19:34), with the reason being that the people of Israel were once foreigners in Egypt and while there were treated

abominably (Leviticus 19:34). The implication is that, since Israelites know how it feels to be treated poorly because of their ethnicity, they should treat foreigners in their land with respect. While this is not directly about money or the difference between rich and poor classes, it does imply that a general level of equality should be the norm. One should not discriminate between foreigners and locals when enforcing the Law.

When describing laws related to harvests, Leviticus 19:9-10 forbids one from harvesting one's entire crop yield. Rather, the farmer is told not to take every crop but to "leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:10). In verse 11, the writer goes on to warn the farmer not to "steal or deal falsely" (Leviticus 19:11), implying that taking the entire harvest amounts to stealing. The passage goes on to warn a person not to "cheat your neighbor, nor rob him" (Leviticus 19:13) and not to be "partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty" when one judges a matter between two individuals (Leviticus 19:15). We see here an "equality" between different sectors of society. One is not allowed to discriminate based on class when making a ruling. Theoretically, there should be no corruption in courts. The food grown on the land should not go towards feeding the farmer alone; a section of the land needs to be cordoned off so that those who go without food need not go hungry. The poor would therefore have a social safety net.

In Isaiah 3:14, God is said to be judging Israel because they "have eaten up the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by...grinding the faces of the poor?" (3:14-15). The writer goes on to say that God will take away the fine clothes and will replace them with sackcloth" (Isaiah 3:24). The people are said to have rebelled against God by engaging in acts of oppression against the poor in the land. They have obtained great wealth, and much of it has not been pbtained honestly; this wealth came from the poor whom the elite have exploited, and as such they have shown contempt for God, who made them in his image.

In Isaiah 5:7, the writer goes on to stay that God "looked for justice, but [beheld] oppression" (Isaiah 5:7). The people of Israel were expected to take care of their own, but now they are shown not to have done so. They have thus come under God's judgment.

Amos paints a similar picture. In a lamentation against the land of Israel, the author states that "you tread down the poor and take grain taxes from him" (Amos 5:11). He goes on to say that the people are taking part in "Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate" (5:12). Corruption on the part of the elite has resulted in the poor of the land not having access to justice that elite members have. Those who are supposed to hear their case do not do so but take bribes instead, making them partial to those who oppress God's people. The chapter goes on to describe a future "day of the LORD" (5:18), in which many in Israel will be unpleasantly surprised by what

comes to pass. The author says "Let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream" (5:24). Many who thought they were in good standing with God will find out that they are not, while many of those who are down-trodden in society will experience a lifting up. God will even the scales, helping those who think themselves forsaken.

Given some of the lavish descriptions of certain clothing items proscribed by the Law on priests and some of the lavish descriptions of the Temple, it would be difficult to argue that such verses would mean that wealth is inherently immoral. It would, however, not be right to have such lavish wealth if one gained it by oppression. As Amos 6:8 says, "I abhor the pride of Jacob, And hate his palaces; therefore I will deliver up the city And all that is in it." This chapter is placed immediately after a chapter which mentions that God is opposed to the oppression taking place in Israel, where the poor are deprived of what they should have as the elites gain more and more. It is in this context that YHWH states that he will tear down the palaces that Israelites have built up. The owners have felt much pride and placed their faith in wealth rather than God, as evidenced by the fact that they did not care for the poor in their midst.

### 4.2.4. Old Testament references to land

In 1 Kings 21, there is an account of a "commoner" named Naboth, who is coerced by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel into giving up his land. Initially, Ahab goes to Naboth on amicable terms, offering to give Naboth another vineyard in its place or its value in money (1 Kings 21:2). Naboth refuses the offer, saying that he will not give up the land that he has inherited from his ancestors (1 Kings 21:3-4). Jezebel refuses the rejection of the offer, telling Ahab that he is the king and should therefore be able to get his way, not acquiescing to the will of a "commoner" (1 Kings 21:7). Rather than directly taking the land from Naboth, she devises a plan that will lead to his death, and when he is killed, Ahab will own the land that once belonged to Naboth (1 Kings 21:9-10). Ahab takes control of the land, but Elijah subsequently preaches judgment on Ahab (1 Kings 21:21-22).

What is interesting to note is some of the similarities between this incident and Lazarus and the Rich Man. In both cases, it is said that a man will be with dogs (1 Kings 21:24; Luke 16:21). The interesting difference, however, is that Luke records the poor man as having only dogs as friends, whereas the account in 1 Kings has the rich king ending up with the dogs (or is warned that such will become of him if he does not repent). At a first glance, it appears that Luke is equating Lazarus with Ahab, as he is also with the dogs. However, this would contradict the fact that he has a name meaning "God helps". What it appears that Luke is attempting to say is that by being with the dogs, Lazarus appears to be in the position once occupied y Ahab, as one who is not in God's good graces. However,

the reversal, in which Lazarus is sent to Abraham's bosom in the afterlife, shows that Lazarus is not in fact the one rejected by God; the Rich Man is.

Leviticus 25:23-34 describes laws regarding land ownership. A section of these laws says that a man must always be allowed to redeem any land that he has sold, whether through a next of kin (if available) or directly to the seller (Leviticus 25:25-26) if the land has been sold to someone else because of the owner's poverty. If the former owner no longer has the means to redeem the land, the occupier gets to keep the land until the year of Jubilee, in which the occupier is required to return the land to the original owner (Leviticus 25:28). Such laws would ensure that a member of the land of Israel and his family would not be left destitute should they need to sell their property for possessions. Generational poverty was thus prevented.

It does not appear to be the case that the Rich Man has honoured the Jubilee laws. As stated previously, it is likely that Lazarus was left destitute as a result of the likes of the Rich Man acquiring more and more land, forcing him off land that he would previously have used to produce his daily bread. As far as the Levitical Law is concerned, he is a transgressor of the Law. The parable does not say for certain that Lazarus had his land taken from him by the Rich Man or that he was a former "peasant" who used to gain produce from his fields. However, since many gained wealth in such a way, it is not a stretch to say that this kind of scenario is what Luke had in mind.

What is important to note here is that the people of Israel viewed the land as YHWH's land (Wright 1992:226). As Wright (1992:226) notes, the land belonged to YHWH, who had graciously given it to his people, and it was now being used by Romans, who were believed not to have such a right. The people of Israel believed that they were in line with the Law and the Prophets, which gave them the social identity of "people of YHWH", and this was believed to give them the group entitlement of living on the land without imperial powers ruling over them. The Romans were therefore viewed as doing something that was not part of their group entitlements by ruling over the land.

Luke thus shows the Rich Man acting like the Romans towards Lazarus. As an Israelite, Lazarus is part of the social identity "people of God" and bears the group entitlement to live on the land in Palestine. The Rich Man acts against this social identity by depriving Lazarus of the right to live on the land. The Rich Man is acting like the Roman imperial overlords, who according to Luke do not bear the group entitlement of ruling the land. A reader would expect that the Rich Man, by virtue of descent from Abraham (a concept that will be discussed in the next chapter), would be the one who held a social identity that made him one of the people of God. However. he is shown to be acting like those who are opposed to God and therefore to be someone who does not respect social identities that God has bestowed.

Luke thus presents a status illegitimacy on the part of the Rich Man. He may claim to be an Israelite, and therefore believe that he has the group entitlement of living on Israelite land. However, Luke shows by the reversal of fortunes in his parable that the Rich Man does not have a legitimate claim to this social identity or the group entitlements that come with it. This status illegitimacy leads to a reversal of social identities in the latter section of the parable (Luke 16:23-31). According to Luke, the Rich Man's high position is not legitimate. He has acted according to the precepts of a different social identity, that of Rome. He was not allowing Lazarus his in-group benefit of living in the land of Israel (technically, Lazarus did live there, but not on his own land or with a decent quality of life). Luke uses a reversal of social identities at the end, where Lazarus takes the social identity of "Israelite" and the Rich Man loses it.

## 4.3. Application of this information to social identity

As the researcher stated in chapter one, Kuecker's main argument is that Luke intended to destroy social boundaries by describing sayings that accept Gentiles, or at least foreshadow a Gentile mission, as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Sayings that appear to focus exclusively on national Israel are ascribed to people without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Such work was seen by Luke as human-centered, and did not describe what God was trying to do through Jesus' ministry. Much of what Luke was trying to say was that forms of reconciliation were the intended work of the Holy Spirit while nationalistic outlooks were human in origin.

Kuecker's work deals mostly with Jewish-Gentile relations, a topic which is foreign to the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Some of the principles from his work, however, do apply to the parable.

As was the case between Jews and Gentiles, there was a divide. Such groups would not partake in table fellowship with one another. Actions of members of these groups perpetuated these ideas, thus ensuring that divisions placed between such groups stayed as they were. There was a chasm fixed between them, which no member of either group would dare to cross.

In the researcher's view, Luke is trying to say through Lazarus and the Rich Man that members of the social identity "Israelite" should look after their own, as they share a similar social identity as the covenant people chosen by God. While some would put their trust in their nationality, this was not sufficient for one to be a member of the house of Israel. Being a non-Gentile also did not guarantee that one was in reality a member of the house of Israel. People who were members of national Israel

showed themselves to be outside of God's kingdom of they partook in the ways of those who occupied their territory, losing their care for other members of their community in the process (Brawley 2020:156). There should be no chasm between Jew and Gentile. How much more should there be no chasm between two members of the house of Israel, even if one is deemed "unclean" or otherwise "unfit" to be a member of the community? Members who were thought to be outsiders were actually members of the house of Israel. To borrow Pauline language, there was "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). One had to look out for all members of the community, even if they were looked down upon by societal standards.

The Rich Man had the social identity of "rich man". As has been discussed in chapter two, there were social as well as monetary aspects to wealth in Luke's day. A patron stood to gain honour from helping a client who had little means of obtaining monetary wealth. However, Lazarus did not have a high-enough status to help the Rich Man gain more honour. His lack of monetary resources and honour left him both unable to buy his daily necessities and unable to take part in the social life of Israel. Such would have left others thinking that Lazarus was not part of the social identity of "House of Israel", but the reversal in fortunes shows that he was in actuality part of such an identity. Social identities in Luke's view include those who are truly of the House of Israel, or "in Christ", and those who are not. In Luke's view, all are welcome to join this social identity.

The social group, "rich", in Luke's view, should not hold up group boundaries to the exclusion of those who are not considered rich enough to join this group. In-group bias toward such a group is not the way Luke would have things. Rather, those of the identity "House of Israel" will look after their own, not allowing such in-group biases to drive their members apart.

Furthermore, those who think that they have the social identity of "people of God" may actually be acting in opposition to God (see the discussion on land and social identity above in section 4.4.). Those who acted like the Romans would therefore, according to Luke, lose the group entitlement of living in YHWH's land (see Brawley 2020:156; Wright 1992:302). To use Kuecker's (2011) term, the Rich Man displayed Status Illegitimacy. According to Luke, people like the Rich Man, who put more stock in their identity as elite members in society than their status as one of God's covenant people, are not legitimate claimants to the social identity "people of God". They side with those whose social identity is outside of God's covenant people, and so they do not have a legitimate claim to be one of God's covenant people. They therefore do not have a claim to the social identities legitimised by Moses and the prophets, hence Abraham's saying that people like the Rich Man need to heed them.

# Chapter Five - The Significance of Abraham in Lazarus and the Rich Man

Given that Abraham occupies a significant portion of the parable, the researcher thinks that it will do us well to examine the status of Abraham in Luke's writings. Given the prominence of Abraham, the researcher decided to dedicate a chapter to Abraham specifically, as the parable deals largely with questions regarding what it means to be "children of Abraham". In Lazarus and the Rich

Man, Abraham is presented as the one in whose bosom Lazarus is shown to be. Given such a role of Abraham in the story, it is crucial to examine the Lukan view of Abraham and how this view is furthered in Lazarus and the Rich Man. More specifically, the question needs to be asked: what we can learn about social identities given that Lazarus is portrayed as having a new social identity in the bosom of Abraham? He leaves behind his life as a poor beggar on earth and travels to Abraham's bosom, where it is revealed that the life he once lived on earth did not show his true identity. His real identity is shown in his depiction in the afterlife. The question is: was his status elevated? If Luke had a high view of Abraham, and the researcher will argue that he did, then his status was indeed raised.

Luke uses Abraham in his characterisation of the characters. The position that Abraham holds in Luke's narrative (and specifically the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man) will determine how the characters are characterised in Luke's narrative. If Luke sees Abraham as one who occupies a high position, it will paint the characters associated with him in the story in a positive light. In terms of social identity, it will mean that the characters described have a high-status social identity if they are associated with Abraham and low-status social identity if they are not.

As an Israelite, the Rich Man could well have thought that he had ascribed honour as a "child of Abraham". Chapter two dealt with the concept of honour: a high honour rating, and being in a group with a high rating, allowed one access to more group entitlements and greater social status. "Child of Abraham" would, of course, be thought to be his social identity, one that he would have believed allowed him the group entitlement of being part of God's Kingdom when it came.

In terms of social identity, Abraham is an important marker. He is the Jewish Patriarch, through whom God had made his covenant to the people of Israel (Genesis 15:5, 17:1-8). It is therefore expected that Luke would make use of the figure of Abraham in constructing new social identities; use of the figure of Abraham would tell us what Luke believed about Judaism and his belief about Jesus in relation to other Judaisms of his day.

This chapter will begin with Abraham's significance in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. It will then go wider, including a few other Lukan writings that mention Abraham. The chapter will then take these findings and analyse them in terms of social identity in Lazarus and the Rich Man.

## 5.1. Abraham in Lazarus and the Rich Man

### 5.1.2. The Old Testament and Lazarus as a servant of Abraham

Yoder notes that Eliezer is the name of a servant of Abraham in Genesis 15, and he argues that Lazarus is a colloquial form of Eliezer (Yoder 2019:3, 8-10). He goes on to reference different occasions from the Old Testament in which this servant of Abraham is represented. He acknowledges

that the name is not used in much of the writings in the Old Testament (only Genesis 15:2), but goes on to mention other Jewish traditions mentioning him in key moments in Abraham's life (Yoder 2019:11). When referring to Abraham's servant in the Old Testament writings, the researcher will refer to him as "Eliezer"; when referring to the character in the parable told by Jesus in Luke's narrative, the researcher will refer to him as "Lazarus". One of the literary references that he mentions in Lazarus and the Rich Man is that Eliezer helped to obtain a burial site for Abraham (Yoder 2019:11). He argues that one should think of Eliezer during the burial negotiations in Genesis 23, as he is mentioned in Genesis 24 as the one bargaining for Isaac to be married to Rebecca in the following chapter (Genesis 24:34-49) (Yoder 2019:11). He argues that, since Luke is an author who is good at making thematic links and is well-versed in the Septuagint, it appears that Luke is trying to create a picture in which the reader thinks of Eliezer the bargainer when reading about the Rich Man having a burial at the expense of Lazarus (Yoder 2019:11). According to Yoder, he is constantly identified as such in Rabbinic traditions (Yoder 2019:11).

When taking Isaac up on the mountain to be sacrificed, Abraham takes two young men, presumably servants, with him (Genesis 22:3), and Yoder cites Rabbinic Tradition as naming one of them as Abraham's son, Isaac (Yoder 2019:10). Here we are given an account of Eliezer before he is about to be killed (or so he thinks). Eliezer is introduced here, and forms an inclusio with the account of his bargaining for Rebecca at the end of chapter 24 (Yoder 2019:10).

Yoder also finds stylistic similarities between Genesis 22-24 and Lazarus and the Rich Man. He notices an inclusion of "love" and "looking up with the eyes" (Yoder 2019:11). For instance, Abraham is commanded to take his son Isaac, "whom you love" (Genesis 22:2), and sacrifice him, and then Abraham "lifted his eyes" (22:4). The order is reversed in Genesis 24. First, Isaac and Rebecca "lifted [their] eyes" (24:63-64), and later Isaac "loved" Rebecca (24:27).

Yoder further notes that in the Genesis account, it is Abraham who is in charge of affairs; Abraham is the one who has the authority to make demands of Eliezer (Yoder 2019:12). In the Genesis account, Abraham sends Eliezer on a mission to find a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:3-9), while in Lazarus and the Rich Man, the Rich Man expects to be allowed to wield the authority that was reserved for Abraham alone (he expects to be allowed to give orders to Abraham's servant) (Yoder 2019:12). Instead of requesting to get his own water or go to his brothers himself, he expects Abraham to send Lazarus to do these tasks for him (Luke 16:24, 27-30) (Yoder 2019:12). What this shows is that the Rich Man does not even view Abraham as having the authority with which Jewish tradition of his day endowed him.

A potential weakness in Yoder's case is that he relies on Rabbinic commentaries, which post-

date Luke's writings. While his argument might seem at first to be less convincing on these grounds, it would be a mistake to think that this necessarily discredits his argument as a whole. While the texts themselves may have been written at a later stage, it is not impossible that the traditions on which they were based were around during the time of Luke's writing of his Gospel, especially since Luke was writing after the Temple was destroyed and at a time when the Rabbinical writers were thinking these traditions through in order to make sense of their religion now that the Temple on which their religion was largely centred had been destroyed. While this should encourage caution before accepting every detail of the parable as based on such Rabbinic traditions, Yoder has shown literary links between the two, and so it seems to the researcher that Yoder has made a largely convincing case that the traditions on which he has based his conclusions were around in some form in Luke's day (See also Cohen 2006:148-152; Kister and Wold 2018).

What this means is that Abraham is shown to have a high status in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man. While Luke does not explicitly state as much, it is implied by the fact that Abraham's bosom is the place of paradise in which Lazarus sits while the Rich Man is tormented. Taking into account Yoders's argument that Lazarus was based on Eliezer, it appears that "God helps" those who are servants/children of Abraham (given that *pais*, while literally meaning "child" can also refer to a servant, perhaps Luke meant to show that the servant was part of Abraham's family in a way similar to Lazarus). In the researcher's view, this shows Abraham to have the status of master. While he is certainly not God or the one whom God has appointed as a judge (such a role was given to Jesus), he is indeed the father of Israel. By showing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, Luke shows that those who are like Lazarus are the ones who will ultimately get to enjoy the blessings of God. In a time of persecution, such a message would be of great comfort to Luke's audience and also a message of dire warning to those who refused to listen to his message.

Yoder's argument may be made stronger by the word *apopherein* used in Luke 16:22. In a short article, Van der Horst makes the argument that the word *apopherein* has the connotation of something being brought back to where it truly belongs (Van der Horst 2006:142). Rather than the simple "carried away" as seen in several English translations, the term brings with it the connotation that the object, or in this case person, being carried away is going back to the place where it truly belongs, giving legitimacy to the fact that the object was not originally in its proper place. The prefix *apo-*, according to Van der Horst, implies this (Van der Horst 2006:143).

To back up his claim, Van der Horst refers to several ancient Greek texts in which the term is used to describe something going back to where it is alleged to belong. The researcher has looked at the ancient sources used by van der Horst. He argues that the verb *apago* is used in various texts to

describe something being led away, back to where it actually belongs (Van der Horst 2006:143). For instance, he cites Xenophon's *Anabasis* 1.3.14, in which it is said that Clearchus might not send back generals to Greece where they belong. In context, Clearchus is deciding whether or not to take troops from Tarsus to Greece when King Cyrus has ordered that his troops go no further (Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.3.2.-1.3.14).

Van der Horst also appeals to Plato's *Phaedo* 58b, in which it is mentioned that a ship is sent to Delos every year by Athenians who appealed to Apollo to save fourteen youths who would otherwise have been eaten by the Minotaur (Van der Horst 2006:143). The word *apago* here is also used to describe an offering that was given by obligation to Apollo, who rightfully earned it (Plato Phaedo 58b).

For the word *apopherein*, the one used in Luke 16:22, van der Horst refers to Thucydides 5.31 (Van der Horst 2006:143). Here, payments from the Delian league to Athens are spoken of as payments which the Athenians are entitled to receive (Thucydides *History of the Pelopponesian War* 5.31). In this case, however, the word is used in a context in which it is being debated whether or not the money is actually meant to be paid. Members of the Delian league have just left the league to join the Argive League with Sparta, and these have decided that the payments to Athens are no longer legitimate (Thucydides *History of the Pelopponesian War* 5.31). In the researcher's view, this goes against van der Horst's view that the word *apopherein* necessitates that the object being carried is being carried to where it belongs.

The word *apo-* literally means "away", and has been used as a prefix in words that mean things along the lines of "carried away" or "led away". To the researcher's mind, van der Horst has not shown convincingly that the word necessitates a connotation of the object being carried being taken to its legitimate destination. While it does certainly mean this in some cases, the example of its use in Thucydides cited above shows to the researcher's mind that such a connotation is not necessitated. So, while it is not necessarily the case that *apopherein* means "to carry back to where it belongs", it can nevertheless be used in such a way. When taken in conjunction with Yoder's case, it appears that Luke is trying to make the point that Lazarus is going back to where he belongs.

As far as the theme of Lazarus going back to where he belongs (in the bosom of Abraham) is concerned, it can be noted that being in the bosom of someone represents love (O'Kaine 2007:490). In other words, by showing Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, Luke is showing Lazarus to be in a position in which Abraham is showing him love in such a way that shows that Lazarus is where he belongs. This shows that Lazarus is the one who in reality holds the social identity of "child of Abraham".

### 5.1.2. Abraham as an example of hospitality

Perhaps most significantly when dealing with Lazarus and the Rich Man and the concept of social identity, Abraham is also an example of hospitality. According to Van Eck (2009:9), this is among the main contributing factors to the shock value of the parable. It would be unthinkable that a figure such as Abraham would deny hospitality to someone who asked, especially since the Rich Man could be seen by Luke's contemporaries as someone who could legitimately hold the title, "child of Abraham" (Van Eck:2009:9).

For an Old Testament text that shows Abraham's hospitality, we can turn to Genesis 18. Here, three men arrive at Abraham's dwelling (Genesis 18:2). When Abraham sees these men, seemingly wearied from their journey, he rushes to Sarah and requests that food and drink be brought to the men while they rest under the trees (18:3-8). Abraham does not bring mere leftovers to the men but rather goes out and finds some high quality items: he kills a good calf, has Sarah use three measures of fine meal to make bread, and serves them butter, bread, and the calf which he has killed (18:6-8). Abraham is a rich man, but he does not let those who are in need go away hungry; he serves them and ensures that they are well-fed.

This is in stark contrast to the Rich Man of the parable. While Abraham ensures that the men are fed not only with leftovers but with good food, the Rich Man cannot even bring himself to feed Lazarus with the bread used by him and his guests to clean their hands. In his destitute state, Lazarus longed for the opportunity to eat even these morsels of food (Luke 16:22). If Abraham is seen in Jewish tradition as someone to be obeyed (see Brawley 2020:156), the Rich Man's performance is abysmal. In his desire to keep his honour by interacting with and feeding only people of a class which could increase his own honour, he was perfectly satisfied to let Lazarus starve at his gate. He is unwilling to extend a hand of hospitality to the *ptochos* who is right on his doorstep. Given that Abraham is usually quick to show hospitality, it would be unexpected that he would refuse to help one of his descendants, but he does so anyway (Smit 1978:637).

What we can learn here is that being a "child of Abraham" also means acting in a way similar to Abraham, imitating his good deeds. Such action would be evidence of repentance, which is an important theme for Luke (one only has to look at his redactions from the Matthean tradition: for instance, in the parable of the Lost Sheep in Matthew 18:10-14//Luke 15:1-7 Matthew mentions nothing about repentance whereas Luke adds it). The lack of good deeds in imitation of Abraham shows that the Rich Man does not really belong to Abraham's family or the social identity, "children of

Abraham".

In Luke 16:30, the Rich Man tells Abraham that if someone goes to his brothers from the dead, "they will repent", as he presumably thinks that such a sign will be convincing evidence. This, however, raises the question of the motivation of the brothers who may or may not change their behaviour after seeing someone rise from the dead. While the researcher is admittedly taking a few liberties based on things not explicitly mentioned in the text, it seems to be the case that one of the reasons for Abraham's refusal to grant the Rich Man's request is that his brothers' "repentance" would result from only a fear of the consequences; in other words, it would not be a genuine repentance. However, the researcher does believe that such liberties are justified inferences from the text. In Luke 16:24, the Rich Man asks that Abraham send Lazarus to fetch water for him. What is ironic is that the Rich Man appears to believe that he has the right to command Abraham and that his rich status allows him to continue to view himself as having more worth than Lazarus even in the afterlife which has proven him wrong. In other words, he still views himself as the one at the top of the social ladder; he views himself as still being a "child of Abraham". He has also not really changed his mindset; his continued attempts to suggest that Lazarus do his bidding suggest that he still views himself as the one in a higher position.

Finally, as Cadoux notes, it is strange that Abraham, and not God, is represented as the one around whom heaven is centred in the parable (Cadoux 1930:128). He accepts the notion that the parable in general represents Jesus' ethical views, and so accepts its authenticity (Cadoux 1930:128). He argues that the reason for putting Abraham at the centre of heaven is that Jewish reverence would not have allowed for the conversation at the end of the parable (Cadoux 1930:128). While it is not quite crystal clear what he means by this, it seems to the researcher that he is saying that Jesus could make Abraham reliant on Moses and the prophets; if, however, he had made God reliant on Moses and the prophets, he would be guilty of blasphemy. In other words, Abraham was a man and could appeal to the authority of the Law and the Prophets; the audience would have felt that God's word should be convincing without appeal to the Torah. To tell a parable in which God's word does not convince can potentially be an act of blasphemy.

Regardless of Luke's reasons for putting Abraham at the centre of heaven, this does reveal something important: Abraham is considered in God's eyes to have a high social status, and the group which answers to him is therefore entitled to the benefits which come from being a "child of Abraham". He uses Abraham to represent those who are truly loyal to God. As such, these have a high social status.

### 5.1.3. Abraham's Bosom

Somov and Voinov refer to Isaiah 49:10 and some apocalyptic works such as 2 Enoch 45:2 to suggest that contemporary beliefs included belief that those faithful to God would one day never hunger and enjoy a banquet with the patriarchs (Somov and Voinov 2017:622). They thus blend metaphors together to show that, for Luke, eternal life included eating with Abraham.

They go on to describe the use of the word *kolpos* as being indicative of Lazarus' being a "child" of Abraham (Somov and Voinov 2017:626). They refer to LXX texts in which the word is used, such as Numbers 11:12 and 2 Samuel 12:3, to show that in the LXX it had a meaning along the lines of "fatherly relationship" (Somov and Voinov 2017:626). They are not entirely convinced that "Abraham's Bosom" was a standard description of the blessed afterlife in Luke's day as they argue that the *Testament of Abraham* may contain Christian interpolations (Somov and Voinov 2017:625). While it is not necessarily a description of a blessed afterlife, it does indeed connote affection (O'Kaine 2007:490), and so shows Abraham honouring Lazarus where he is.

Somov and Voinov (2017:627) go on to suggest that the image also conveys the message of one being a guest of honour at a banquet, and reference such a usage in John 13:23 and in a letter written by Pliny the Younger (see also Pliny the Younger *Epistulae* 4.22.4). This shows that Lazarus now holds the position of honour – he now holds the honour that was previously thought to belong exclusively to the Rich Man.

What Somov and Voinov's article does show us is the nature of what it means to be in the Bosom of Abraham in the afterlife. While they are rightly skeptical of the notion that such a description is standard in Judaisms contemporary with Luke, they still show convincingly that concepts used in the parable show Lazarus to be in an honourable position. As argued throughout this chapter, Abraham holds a place of high honour in Luke's writings. It is therefore a position of great honour for Lazarus to be in Abraham's bosom at the eschatological banquet.

## 5.2. Abraham in Luke's writings

### 5.2.1. A historical interest in Abraham?

According to Dahl, Luke's descriptions of Abraham contain more of a historian's interest than those of the other New Testament authors (Dahl 1966:140). He compares the presentation of Abraham in Luke's writings to his presentation in Paul's writings (on which the researcher will not go into much detail). With reference to Romans 4, he shows that Paul uses Abraham as an example of justification by faith, as he was given the status of a righteous man by God by simply believing God (Dahl 1966:140). In other words, Paul is explicitly using Abraham as a means of justifying the theology he espouses,

whereas Luke does no such thing according to Dahl.

One of his main arguments to this effect is that Luke throughout his narrative presents Abraham as the Father of Judaism (or the Judaisms which existed in his day) rather than the Father of the early Christian movement (Dahl 1966:140). Whereas Paul has used Abraham to prove his theological views, even going so far as to reinterpret Old Testament passages describing him, Luke has refrained from such reinterpretation, regarding Abraham as the Father of Judaism and has not reinterpreted Abraham in such a way as to justify new theology according to Dahl (1966:140). In short, Luke has kept Abraham the historical figure and used him largely as a historical figure, while not reinterpreting Abrahamic passages to make Abraham the Father of Christianity. This does, however, appear to contradict Dahl's other views on Abraham which will be discussed below.

Among other things, Dahl sees Abraham as an eschatological figure in Luke's writings. He is of the opinion that the prophets are seen as martyrs by Luke, and from this he deduces that the Martyr ideology found in 4 Maccabees influenced Luke's outlook on the prophets, although he rejects the notion of a direct transfer of the concept from 4 Maccabees to Luke (Dahl 1966:141). The prophets would be "true children of Abraham", whereas those who ignored them or killed them were not. They were "false children of Abraham".

God is referred to as the "God of Abraham" once in Luke (20:37) and several times in Acts (such as 3:13 and 7:32) (Dahl 1966:141). Such evidence is used by Dahl (1966:141) to conclude that Abraham is an eschatological figure in Luke's writings. This is, in part, a reference to 4 Maccabees 13:17, in which it is said that martyrs will be on the side of such Old Testament heroes as Abraham and Isaac (Dahl 1966:141). In 4 Maccabees 7:19 and 16:25, the author talks about prophets dying and living for God, and Dahl sees a similarity to, for example, Luke 13:28, in which it said that the prophets are coming, since according to Dahl (1966:141), Luke regards the prophets as largely being martyrs.

Noting Acts 7, Dahl (1966:142) argues that Abraham's primary role in Luke's writings is that of the primary recipient of the promises of God (see also Smith 2017:142). In Stephen's martyrdom speech, there is an early reference to the fact that Abraham was called directly by God from Haran and that, when he started, he was both childless and landless (Dahl 1966:144). He then goes on to discuss the fact that God had made a promise directly to Abraham that he would be given many descendants who would inhabit a great land (Acts 7:8) (Dahl 1966:144; Smith 2017:148). The story of Israel then unfolds as the story of the descendants of Abraham, who are freed from Egypt and go on to inhabit the promised land (Dahl 1966:144).

This, according to Dahl, sets the tone for a view of Israel's history as one of prophecy and fulfilment, in which one like Moses is said to rise, and in Stephen's speech this prophet is equated with

Jesus (Dahl 1966:144). One who rejects Jesus would therefore, according to Luke, be a descendant of one of those who rejected the prophets of old.

Acts 3 promotes a similar theme to the one about which Dahl writes, although briefer. Addressing a Jewish audience, Peter describes the death of Jesus by the hand of the Israelite authorities of his day and his resurrection as being the accomplishment of the plan of the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Acts 3:13). In verse 23, Peter warns that anyone who rejects Jesus the new prophet will be cut of from God's promises. Here Luke begins the theme which he expands in Stephen's martyrdom speech – that the Jewish authorities have rejected one who was chosen by God to bring about the promise of Abraham (Dahl 1966:149).

While in some cases Dahl makes a convincing case, there are some aspects of his case that are problematic. As far as the literary dependence on 4 Maccabees is concerned, the link he tries to create appears tenuous. The Maccabean account refers to martyrs who lost their lives by the hands of oppressors of Israelites, whereas the prophets are killed by the Israelites themselves. Furthermore, It is not certain that 4 Maccabees was written before Luke's Gospel, and so one should justify believing it to have been written before Luke before using it as a template for Luke; Dahl has not done so.

### 5.2.2. Similarities between Abraham and Zechariah

Ravens notices similarities between the infancy narratives and the story of Abraham. For instance, he is of the opinion that Zechariah's questioning of Gabriel (and, by extension, God) has a literary dependence on Genesis 15:1-2, in which Abraham questions God about his child as he and his wife are past child-bearing age (Ravens 1995:27). While similar, it is noteworthy that, in the case of Abraham, God does not strike Abraham with blindness, and Abraham is used as an example of someone who believed in God's promise and was therefore considered righteous by God (Genesis 15:6). It may therefore be a stretch to argue for complete literary dependence here, but the similarities are noteworthy in that, like Abraham, Zechariah is in a position in which it would seem impossible to have a child.

Ravens also points out that circumcision was based on the Abrahamic covenant (Ravens 1995:196). God blessed Abraham, and as a sign of God's blessing and being a descendant of Abraham, one was required to undergo circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14). This applied to all members of Abraham's household, with those refusing to undergo the ritual no longer considered part of the family. Luke does not attempt to use the Genesis passages to justify the new rule which does not require circumcision. Rather, he refers to the Holy Spirit, using the new experiences of the Holy Spirit by even uncircumcised Gentiles as evidence that it is no longer required if one wishes to belong to the house of

Abraham, with the result that one has access to the promises promised to him (Acts 10:47, 15:7-12) (Ravens 1995:195).

One might be inclined to conclude from the above evidence that Luke is hostile to Abraham. It could appear that Luke disavows the Abrahamic covenant by having the Holy Spirit override it rather than reinterpreting Old Testament passages to justify his theology. However, we see in Lazarus and the Rich Man that Luke has a generally positive view of Abraham. Lazarus, the one whom God helps, goes from death into Abraham's Bosom, which is portrayed as a place if blessing (Luke 16:22,25). The question that needs to be asked is this: How does Luke reconcile the fact that circumcision is no longer required with his generally positive view of Abraham? The question will here receive a brief answer, but due to spacial constraints will not get an exhaustive treatment.

Regarding the birth narratives, Kuecker (2011:55) states that "[Luke] is drawing our attention to [Abraham and Sarah] because of their importance as the recipients of God's covenantal promises" (see also Wright 1992:379). In fact, Luke even goes so far as to use the word *amemptos*, which is also used in Genesis 17:1 to describe the faithfulness of Abraham (Kuecker 2011:55). Like Abraham, Zechariah and Elizabeth were accounted righteous before God because of their faithfulness. There is a contrast, however, in that Zechariah is hesitant to believe that he can have a son in his old age. He is, however, according to Luke, still a faithful exemplar in the tradition of Abraham.

Kuecker (2011:54) notes that, when describing Abraham's descendants, the author of Genesis indicates that the group of his descendants will be made up of people from all over the world (Genesis 12:3), and Luke picks up on this (Acts 3:25). He makes sure to point out that the group of physical Israelites is an identity under threat from foreign occupation (Kuecker 2011:54). A tension is created in this stage of Luke's writings: on the one hand Luke is trying to assure his audience that the "children of Abraham" are indeed people from many nations and not just physical Israelites, and on the other hand Luke is trying to balance this notion against the fact that Israelite identity is threatened by foreign occupation and rule. He is trying to assuage the fears of Israelite readers who may feel threatened by the notion that they are losing their identity to a foreign one. Since God is creating a new identity for them based on other factors, it should not, according to Luke, be disconcerting to his Jewish readers that Gentiles are now being included in a category previously thought to be reserved for them. They have also not lost out on the promise of Abraham, as God has fulfilled this promise in the new movement started by Jesus of Nazareth.

As previously stated, one of Kuecker's main points in his book is that Luke uses his writings to show that fellowship can now take place between Jews and Gentiles. When the Holy Spirit is referenced before a quote is attributed to someone, the character often says something that implies that

old divisions are no longer applicable. Given the references to Abraham, it would seem that the division between Jew and Gentile (and by extension, "unclean" Jew and "clean" Jew) is no longer applicable either. In the new era ushered in by the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, one of the consequences is that such divisions should fall away among members of the "children of Abraham". Those who do not throw away such attitudes show themselves not to be children of Abraham even if they viewed themselves as having such a social identity.

When we put together the views of Ravens and Kuecker on the early chapters of Luke, we can see an implicit expansion on who can be counted as children of Abraham. From Ravens, we have learned that Abraham is used as an example of someone who has served God faithfully. Zechariah and Elizabeth, who were examples of faithfulness, are represented as bearing children in old age just like Sarah and Abraham did. As the birth narratives go on, we see that Luke uses the Holy Spirit as a way of showing that the way is now open to Gentiles (The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the Song of Mary in Luke 1:46-56, where Gentiles are not present, but he is mentioned in the Magnificat in Luke 1:67-79).

### 5.2.3. Abraham in Stephen's martyrdom speech

Abraham is also referenced in Acts 7. According to Smith (2017:164), the historical references to Israel's history in the passages are used to make points about Jesus in the day in which Stephen gave his speech. As was the case with the opponents of many of Israel's prophets, including Moses' Israelite opponents and Joseph's brothers, some people who believed that they were staying true to the promises of Abraham were shown to be the ones who were in actuality working against the very God they claimed to be serving (Smith 2017:164).

In selling Joseph into slavery, his brothers were disobedient to the covenant of Abraham (Smith 2017:164). By doing such an action, his brothers showed that they were more interested in making money off their brother by selling him as a slave to a man from a foreign land than they were in obeying God and eventually living in the promised land of Israel. Those that rejected Moses and participated in idolatry are those who have rejected the promise of Abraham (Smith 2017:164). They failed to serve God, who had rescued them from 400 years of slavery in Egypt as a sign of his divine favour. Here, God has shown them his favour as evidence of his goodness, and this show of goodness is rejected by the very people to whom it was shown. Interestingly enough, Luke does not mention the story of the golden calf, which would have bolstered his case against the Israelites, as it would be a strong allusion to the accusations Luke is making against them (Smith 2017:164).

Smith further argues that the speech of Stephen in Acts 7 makes the case that God cannot be confined to any specific location (Smith 2017:175). Luke is saying that the Temple does this when it is

used as the focal point of worship (Smith 2017:175). God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, to Moses in Midian (and was with Moses when he was in Egypt and in the wilderness), and to Joseph in Egypt (Smith 2017:175). God can be found anywhere, and his dwelling is not restricted to a Temple made by human hands. What this appears to show is that one cannot be a "child of Abraham" while thinking of God as being "static". God is the God of the entire creation, and as such it would be considered incorrect to try to restrict God to a physical building.

Furthermore, Luke paints a picture of the Temple as limiting salvation to the Temple whereas Luke attempts to show that "salvation" can extend to the entire world. God is not limited by any geographical limitations that mere humans would attempt to put on him. As far as Luke is concerned, salvation is not dependent on ethnicity (Smith 2017:175). With regard to the social identity of "children of Abraham", this implies that anyone from any nation can assign this identity to themselves. Such a privilege is no longer reserved only for the people of the physical land of Palestine/Israel.

In Acts 7:8, Luke specifically refers to Abraham, saying that God gave Abraham the "covenant of Circumcision". Abraham here is given the national identity of Israel; the identity of the Israelites is bound to the fact that they are descendants of Abraham. Abraham is represented as the father of Isaac, who is in turn represented as the father of the twelve patriarchs. Abraham is therefore the father of all members of the twelve tribes of Israel.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Luke views Jesus as the continuance of Israel and Moses and the prophets. While Luke is certainly opposed to the Temple establishment of his time, there is no evidence to indicate that Luke was opposed to Jewish religion as a whole, or even the Old Testament. In fact, Luke begins his account by placing Jesus within the history of Israel, using both direct citations and allusions, and sometimes being explicit while other times using subtle references that only someone from his own time and place would have any hope of understanding without having to read his Gospel a second time. What we see is that Luke has a mostly positive view of the concept of Israel, as Jesus is the one through whom God is ushering in a new age of Israel, a new epoch in Israel's history. Through Stephen's speech in Acts 7, we see that not everyone who claims to be one of Abraham's descendants is really of this identity. He uses the prophets of the past to show that the Israelite establishment has often rejected the prophets that God has sent, and so it should therefore be no surprise, or at least not discrediting, that Jesus was rejected even if he was sent by God. Not everyone who is physically an Israelite is in reality a child of Abraham. Rejection of Jesus implies that one is no longer part of the Abrahamic covenant and therefore no longer a child of Abraham.

Ravens also makes reference to Stephen's martyrdom speech. He references the fact that Abraham was called from outside the land of Israel (Acts 7:2-3), specifically Mesopotamia, as evidence

that God's presence should not be limited to the physical land of Israel (Ravens 1995:60). As far as one's social identity is concerned, then, we should conclude that Luke is saying that one does not have to be one of the people of physical Israel to be a member of the social identity "children of Abraham". Abraham himself was not an Israelite: how much more, then, should one be careful when suggesting that another is not part of the identity "children of Abraham" because of a mere difference in place of origin?

Ravens further notes in the martyrdom speech that Stephen begins the speech by referring to the patriarchs and early kings of Israel (such as David) as "our fathers", but afterwards (from about Acts 7:51-52), he refers to Israel's leaders as "your fathers" (Ravens 1995:62). What Luke would be trying to show in these chapters is that, while once faithful to the Law of God, Israel has lost the plot. After they had been rescued from Egypt and established as a kingdom under the dynasty of David, Israel was largely faithful to the Law. David, in fact, was anointed king because, according to the author of 1 Samuel, "the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7), with the implication being that David matched the description. As a result of David's faithfulness, it was expected that a son of David would redeem Israel from her enemies. What Stephen's speech tells us is that, according to Luke, the present generation of Israelites no longer recognises and lives according to God's divine Law. They are compared to those who were in the past rejected by God because of their unfaithfulness to the Law and their idolatry. This category included even kings of Israel and Judah, who by their idolatry led their kingdoms away from God and into his anger through their misdeeds. The present generation has become their imitators, and as such can no longer call themselves "children of Abaraham". Since the covenant was to Abraham and his descendants, they can no longer lay claim to being part of the covenant that God made with Abraham.

### 5.2.4. Abraham in Luke 3

Luke 3 is another important chapter to look at when examining how Luke views Abraham. Here, John the Baptist (from here on he will be referred to as "John") has just given a speech urging to people to repent and be baptised, in which he quotes a prophecy from Isaiah, saying that the one who will fulfil the prophecy is coming (Luke 3:3-6). John, seeming to know that some of the people who have come to be baptised have come with the intention of performing a mere outward ritual without actually performing the deeds associated with genuine repentance, tells the crowd that they cannot count only on being physical descendants of Abraham (Luke 3:7-9).

He tells them that God is able to make even the stones of the ground into children for Abraham (Luke 3:8). Similarly, when Jesus enters Jerusalem and is told to keep his followers quiet, he tells the

Pharisees that if the people stop praising, the rocks will do it (Luke 19:39-40). There are instances in the Old Testament in which the imagery of stones crying out to God is used, and the researcher will mention Joshua 24:27 and Habakkuk 2:11. In the Joshua passage, several conquests have been accomplished by the Israelites, and Joshua is telling the people that they have agreed to serve God (Joshua 24:14). He then goes on to say that a stone "shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God" (Joshua 24:27). In the Habakkuk passage, a lament is given over the fact that the people of Israel have acted against the commands of God (Habakkuk 2:1-4). As a result of their turning away from God, those who would oppress them, who would normally be prevented by God from doing so, will be let loose on them (Habakkuk 2:6-8). In this context, Habakkuk says that "the stone will cry out from the wall" (Habakkuk 2:11). When this image is applied to John's speech, it appears that John is warning that not all those who think they are Abraham's descendants really have a right to call themselves his children. John appears to be echoing passages from the Old Testament which warn of judgment as a result of turning away from God. While this theme has yet to be developed fully, it appears that John is critiquing the current Jewish establishment, saying that they are not in actuality serving God and will therefore not be allowed to be part of his Kingdom.

This shows us that, to Luke, repentance is a more reliable indicator of one's social identity as a "child of Abraham" than one's birth in first-century Palestine. While Luke has yet to go into detail regarding what he finds to be at fault with the current Israelite establishment, we see that he views them as being "idolatrous" in that, even though they don't worship stone figures, they do not really place their trust in God. In both 3:3 and 3:8, John mentions that it is necessary to repent. From the Greek *metanoia* (a "turning around") we see that a change is necessary, implying that many in his audience are not where they need to be and that they need to change their behaviour. Should they fail to do so, God's judgment will come upon them, as indicated by the allusions to Old Testament passages in which rocks cry out.

### 5.3. Abraham and social identity in Lazarus and the Rich Man

All of this data raises the question: what does Luke's view of Abraham tell us about social identity in Lazarus and the Rich Man? Which groups are being critiqued in the parable? Which in-group bias is being critiqued? And why is such a mentality being critiqued, and why is such a critique being made?

As previously stated, the most important identity in play here is that of "Israelite", and the question of what it means to be an Israelite or "child of Abraham" is raised here. The Rich Man certainly views himself as an Israelite. Throughout the parable he acts as such, thinking that being part

of physical Israel means that he is a member of the group. While there are no Gentile characters in this parable, this is still important to note.

The Rich Man, despite being part of physical Israel, has shown himself not to be a true Israelite as he has taken part in the system which led people like Lazarus to lose their land to rich people who were hoping to expand their wealth by taking it. While enriching himself, he was content to see his fellow Israelites go without basic necessities so that he could increase his wealth, both monetarily and by increasing his honour by associating with people who are not part of the *ptochos* class.

That the Rich Man sees himself as having the social identity "Israelite" is evidenced by the fact that he cries out to Abraham while he is in torment (Brawley 2020:156). He asks Abraham to send Lazarus to give him some water to cool his tongue (Luke 16:24). As such, he is shown to believe himself entitled to the group entitlements that come from being associated with Abraham. He enjoys being part of this group, as the group entitlements mean that he is part of the group that is favoured by God. God promised Abraham that he would give him many descendants (Genesis 15:4, 18-21). God promised Abraham that his descendants would be blessed, ultimately enjoying much prosperity even if they were originally to be subject to oppression in Egypt beforehand. In short, the group entitlements that come with being part of the social group "children of Abraham" is being favoured by God and eventually coming into his Kingdom. In this parable, Luke shows that those who take part in the oppression of other Israelites will no longer have a share of the group entitlements which result from being a child of Abraham.

On the other hand, those who are suffering in their earthly life may seem to have been forsaken by God and no longer entitled to the benefits which come from being part of the group with the social identity,"children of Abraham". They suffer an oppression similar to that described in Genesis 15:13. As such, they were enduring what God told Abraham his descendants would suffer.

A shortened version of the Exodus story could be that the Israelites suffered harshly under Egyptian oppression. When God rescued his people, the Egyptians were the ones who suffered by God's hand. Pharaoh and his armies were shown not to be children of Abraham, as they were the ones oppressing his real descendants. The blessing of Abraham ultimately went to those who suffered under Egyptian oppression. By taking part in the oppression of "descendants of Abraham", the Rich Man and others like him are showing themselves to be on Pharoah's side against Abraham. They therefore lose all entitlements which come from being associated with Abraham. By their actions they show that they are not in fact "children of Abraham". God sides with those who are oppressed, and those of physical Israel who endure oppression, presumably crying out to God, are the real "children of Abraham", and these are actually entitled to the group entitlements of the group "children of Abraham".

The most striking identity difference in this parable is the one between rich and poor. The Rich Man has the social identity "rich" whereas Lazarus has the identity of "*ptochos*". As discussed in chapter 2, the identity of "rich" also had social implications. Rich people would not associate with a *ptochos* because doing so would cause them to lose honour. Their loss of honour would result in the social disgrace of the rich man and his family. They would rather increase their honour through patron-client relationships.

Luke's parable shows us that such people cannot consider themselves "children of Abraham". As we have seen from examples from the account of Abraham in Genesis, Abraham was also a rich man. He likewise owned a large estate, several animals, and vast wealth. However, he was willing to share with those who had need. When the three men came past his dwelling, he did not turn them away, but helped them with some of the best resources he had. He spared no expense when it came to helping those who needed it.

Lazarus is like such travellers in this parable. As a *ptochos*, he needs help to gain the resources he needs for daily living. In this case, however, the Rich Man refuses to do so. He chooses rather to cling to his honour while disassociating himself from Lazarus, believing himself entitled to the group entitlements which come from being part of both "children of Abraham" and "Rich". He held on to group entitlements to which he had no legitimate claim.

From this parable, we see that the ultimate social identity has to be one which is more inclusive than the one in which the Rich Man believes he is located. The Rich Man, by refusing to associate with one he believes to be "beneath" him, has shown himself not to have a valid social identity in Luke's parable. Our social identity, according to Luke, is not to be one which allows us to exclude someone because they have a lower income level or because they are from a lower social class in a caste system. Rather, there should be an equal opportunity for members of every caste and income level to be a part of the group.

As part of the group "children of Abraham", one should act as Abraham did. By showing hospitality to those who needed it, Abraham showed himself not to be concerned with one's place in a social hierarchy. As such, to be recognised as one of his descendants, one needs to be accepting of people from different income levels and class status. Otherwise, one cannot claim such a social identity for oneself.

### 5.3.1. Ascribed honour and status as a "child of Abraham"

As mentioned in chapter two, one's honour rating was an important determiner of where one stood in society, and it could be ascribed or acquired.

Being a "child of Abraham" was believed to give one ascribed honour; having honourable people in one's family's genealogy gave one ascribed honour. Abraham was the great patriarch of first-century Judaisms, and so Israelites were born with ascribed honour as a result of being his descendants (Wright 1992:385). The promises of God were made to Abraham and his children, and so the social identity "child of Abraham" was thought to confer the group entitlement of being a recipient of God's promises, such as membership in the Kingdom of God. The ascribed honour of being Abraham's descendants gave the Israelites the social identity of "children of Abraham" (Smit 1978:637).

As a born Israelite, the Rich Man would have thought himself to be a member of this group. He would have thought that belonging to this group would entitle him to the group entitlement of being part of God's Kingdom (Hultgren 2000:115). He also believed that he held the identity of "rich man". What he was to find out was that he chose the wrong identity to be his terminal identity; he made "rich man" his terminal identity while making "child of Abraham" a subordinate identity. As a result, he is shown not to be part of the group "child of Abraham".

As a *ptochos*, Lazarus would not have seen himself in the same way. While it does appear that he is a born Israelite, he is not treated as such. The Rich Man, who viewed himself as a "child of Abraham", did not extend to Lazarus the treatment to which Lazarus would be entitled as a "child of Abraham". Lazarus should not have been left destitute at the house of another "child of Abraham". As someone with sores, Lazarus would have been viewed as impure (see DeSilva 2000:284-285 for a description of "pure" and "impure"). This impurity would have excluded him from much that would have been considered a group entitlement of the "children of Abraham", such as membership in his community.

Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, those who were of the social identity "child of Abraham" were believed to hold the group entitlement to live on God's land of Israel (Wright 1992:226-228). The Rich Man, as well as others who do as he does, is acting like the Romans, who disrespect the social identity of "children of Abraham" by claiming their group benefit of living in the land of Israel, and is therefore seen as having status illegitimacy (he is not, according to Luke, legitimately part of the social identity "child of Abraham" and therefore does not have the right to claim the group entitlements).

## 5.4. Summary Remarks

Luke exalts the identities of neither "rich" nor "*ptochos*". He has Abraham as the person to whom people go when they die if they are part of God's Kingdom. God has honoured Abraham as the man whose descendants get to be his people. As such, Luke definitely holds Abraham in good stead.

Rather, his children need to imitate him in sharing their resources with others and not looking down upon others because of class differences. In other texts, most notably the scene in which Peter has a vision in Acts 10, Luke makes clear that Gentiles will be welcome in the Kingdom of God. How much more, then, should an Israelite look out for a fellow Israelite? Those who were previously thought of as beyond the pale of inclusion in YHWH's Kingdom are now allowed in, while others are left out.

Luke opens in chapter three of his Gospel by having John announce that not everyone who believes himself to be a "child of Abraham" is in fact a "child of Abraham" (Luke 3:8). The theme is therefore important to Luke. There therefore needs to be warning, or else people will find themselves outside of God's Kingdom.

Abraham is held up as a sort of historical archetype in Luke's Gospel. While Dahl appears to suggest that this is opposed to Abraham's use as a theological archetype, the researcher disagrees that it goes that far. Abraham is certainly used as a theological archetype in the context of Lazarus and the Rich Man. Dahl agreed that he was used as an eschatological figure, and it therefore seems reasonable to see Abraham as a sort of theological archetype in Luke's writings.

The main take-away that Luke would have us take from this passage is, as far as the researcher's research has allowed him to conclude, that one should be careful that one does not engage in oppression of those who truly are "children of Abraham". The social identity that one has should not allow one to discriminate based on income levels or social status. As far as Luke is concerned, all are welcome in God's Kingdom. God will fight for his own, and those that in the end show themselves not to be part of God's Kingdom will find themselves the objects of judgment.

In terms of reversal, there is a reversal of social identities as far as wealth-based identities are concerned. The Rich Man enjoyed his social identity of "rich man" and all its associated benefits while on earth; after his death, he no longer enjoys these benefits because they are taken from him and given to Lazarus. The Rich Man also lived his life thinking that he was part of the social identity of "children of Abraham". He believed that he had legitimate access to the benefits associated with this social identity and so lived accordingly (by living on land in the land of Israel, for instance, and living in Abraham's land). There is a reversal here: the parable goes on to describe Lazarus living with Abraham while the Rich Man has no part in Abraham's land. There is a reversal in that the one who once lived as a "child of Abraham" no longer does so and Lazarus, who originally did not live as a "child of Abraham", now does so.

# Chapter Six - Summary remarks about Moses and the Prophets, Abraham, and social Identity

As stated previously, Abraham and Moses and the prophets are used as important social identity markers in Lazarus and the Rich Man. They were markers of Israelite social identity.

According to the books ascribed to Moses, God had worked to deliver his people from Pharoah. They received a social identity as "Israelites", which came with a significant in-group benefit: the right to live in Israel, the land granted to them by God. Abraham was the one through whom this covenant was made, and so having the identity, "child of Abraham" also gave the group benefit of living in Israel.

After the land of Israel was taken over by foreign occupiers, these social identities gave the group entitlement of being part of the people whom God would vindicate when the Kingdom of God arrived (exactly what this meant differed from group to group).

In the Rich Man and Lazarus, we have seen a status illegitimacy, which was revealed when the Rich Man was surprised that he was not included in the social identities of "Israelite" or "child of Abraham".

Here we should note that the group entitlement to live in the land of Israel was supposed to be for all who held the social identity of "Israelite". As discussed in chapter four, none were supposed to be left without land. Although Lazarus is an Israelite, he does not get access to this group entitlement, as he lives in squalor while the Rich Man lives in luxury and could easily have been unfairly evicted from his land. He is thus denied access to this group entitlement because others who take the social identity do not allow him access to it.

Furthermore, this social identity should have allowed him the group entitlement of taking part in public life, such as religious ceremonies. In chapter two, it was said that his wounds left him "unclean", and he was thus kept away from polite society. He did not have access to this group entitlement. The Rich Man and others like him have taken more than their fair share of group entitlements and thereby left people like Lazarus without their group entitlements.

Lazarus is even left with the dogs. As discussed in chapter two, these could contribute to his being seen as unclean even though they were actually trying to help him.

In short, the Rich Man and others who acted as he did prevented other Israelites from having access to their group entitlements. They are shown to be acting more like Rome than Israel. In Roman thinking, their social identity as "Roman" made them a powerful people who were destined to rule (see, for example, a dramatic portrayal of such a view in Vergil's *Aeneid*). As the people who were more powerful than others, people who had the social identity of "Roman" believed that they had the group entitlement to rule and live in the land of foreigners (as evidenced by instances where Roman citizens obtained land in nations under Roman rule, leaving many unable to work and eke out a living). Although the Rich Man is an Israelite, he acts in accordance with what were believed to be the group entitlements of those with the social identity of "Roman". He thus deprived those with the social identity of "Israelite" of their group entitlements: he took land without returning it in Jubilee year, left some people destitute and unable to participate in religious events and other events in the life of Israel, and continued to gain at the expense of other Israelites.

For this reason, there is a reversal of social identities at the end of the parable. By acting in accordance with the group who appeared to have a powerful social identity (the Roman occupiers), the

Rich Man shows himself to be a member of this group. Lazarus was pushed to the bottom, placed into a group that appeared to have the least powerful social identity (*ptochos*). However, because the Rich Man has acted in accordance with a Roman social identity, he has been placed at the bottom of the social ladder at the end of the parable. Because Lazarus did not act like those who had the social identity of "Roman", he is shown to be a true representative of the house of Israel by his association with Abraham at the end of the parable.

# Chapter Seven - Summary Remarks

Having analysed the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man in light of contemporary understandings of social groups, contemporary parables, and Luke's general view of the prophets and Abraham, the question remains of what the parable tells us in terms of social identity.

From the chapter in which the researcher discussed parallel parables, it appeared that social dimensions were at least as important as descriptions of the afterlife. Megapenthes, for example, was in trouble in the afterlife because of his earthly life in which he attempted to gain vainglory for himself while enriching only himself. He neither studied philosophy and redeemed himself nor lived a simple life like Micyllus. He was satisfied to live in a society in which social stratification was the norm because he was at the top of the social hierarchy; he was not concerned with the fact that such social stratification led to economic inequality in which working-class people such as Micyllus were left

without much resources. Similar themes are found in Si-Osiris and Setme, where the rich man is not concerned about the fate of the poor man. The gods, according to this text, do not hold such a view: they consider it abominable that the rich man chased after wealth instead of living for the benefit of others as well as himself.

We have seen that Luke similarly believed that God was grieved by economic inequality. Those who continued to gain at the expense of others would one day have their day in court. While Luke does not openly say this, it is not unreasonable to think that the Rich Man gained at the expense of Lazarus, taking away the land on which Lazarus would have worked to earn a living.

From the chapters on the prophets and Abraham, we saw that those who expected that they would be in line with Abraham and the prophets were not necessarily in line with Abraham and the prophets. They showed by their actions that they believed themselves to be part of a social identity which included the benefit of being part of God's kingdom. They believed themselves safe from the wrath of God as they were part of the people whom God had delivered from Egypt and to whom God had sworn a covenant. Their exclusion of those they considered undesirable showed that this was not the case.

## 7.1. What we learn about social identity from Lazarus and the Rich Man

In terms of social identity, the character did not hold the social identities that the audience would have expected them to have held. The Rich Man believed himself to be a child of Abraham, and therefore entitled to the benefits of being a child of Abraham.

The Rich Man believed that he held the social identity of "rich". This social identity entitled him to benefits associated with this class. He believed himself to be entitled to comfort, as seen by the fact that he tells Abraham to send Lazarus to bring him water (Luke 16:24). He had access to comfort in his earthly life, and so he believes that he is still entitled to it; it is unthinkable that a man of his status should be subject to such torment as he is experiencing in Hades. He also believes himself entitled to service. He sees the former beggar Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham, and cannot believe that the beggar is enjoying himself in the company of Abraham (16:23). He will not even deign to fetch his own water; because he occupies a high status as a rich man, he expects Lazarus to do his work for him. Abraham evidently does not share this view, as he believes it to be right that the Rich Man is now suffering for what he has done to Lazarus (16:25). He furthermore believed that his social identity of "rich" allowed him to associate only with other "respectable" people while refusing to associate with those he considered beneath him. We see this when he tells Abraham to send Lazarus for him; he

refuses even to speak to Lazarus and believes that he has the authority to have Abraham command Lazarus on his behalf (16:24, 27). He believes that he can distance himself from Lazarus, even though Lazarus is experiencing a blessed afterlife in the bosom of Abraham. He sees for himself that Lazarus is the one who has Abraham's blessing, but he still cannot believe it.

As a rich man, he would have been competing for clients, as a lack of clients would be considered shameful. However, in this situation of reversal, Abraham has become the patron, with the ultimate patron being God himself (Van Eck:2009:8-9). In earthly honour codes, it would be honourable to gain clients, so the expectation would be that Abraham should perform a favour for the Rich Man to gain him as a client. However, he does not do this. Abraham shows that earthly honour codes do not ultimately matter in God's Kingdom. God is honourable regardless of whom he chooses to have as clients; he is not dependent on human standards of honour.

Another social identity that the Rich Man believed himself to have held was "child of Abraham". Abraham even refers to him as "Son" (Luke 16:25), and this reference appears to suggest that even Abraham believes him to be a rightful claimant of such an identity. However, Abraham goes on to say that "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed" (16:25), thus showing that he does not agree with the legitimacy of the Rich Man's belief. He would have believed that by having such an identity he would be entitled to be a part of God's Kingdom. This, however, is shown not to be the case by Abraham's placing of the Rich Man away from him, on the other side of the chasm. The chasm is so wide that it cannot be breached; the chasm that is shown explicitly in the part of the parable which places the Rich Man in Hades is the same as the implied chasm that exists between Lazarus and the Rich Man in their earthly lives (Van Eck:2009:1). The chasm is replicated in the afterlife, not allowing any the Rich Man reprieve and keeping Lazarus in a blessed state.

Bearing in mind that resources, including both social honour and wealth, were considered scarce, the Rich Man would not have wanted to lose any of his by entertaining Lazarus. Lazarus would have been seen as gaining honour at the expense of the Rich Man. As the Rich Man would not have wanted to lose his honour, he would keep it to himself, thus depriving Lazarus of the opportunity to gain honour or physical necessities for himself.

Lazarus, of course believed that he had the social identity of *ptochos*. As such, he did not believe himself entitled to many group benefits. As he was carried to the Rich Man's gate, he hoped to be allowed to eat some of the bread that the guests would not eat; even though this bread was not considered fit for the guests to eat, Lazarus still did not feel entitled to eat the bread himself. He intended to wait until some was given to him.

Lazarus of course knew that he was a physical Israelite. He knew that he lived in the land once

promised to Abraham's descendants. He had the social identity of "Israelite" and "child of Abraham", but as a *ptochos* this was hardly reflected in his life, as he was tossed to the bottom by others who considered themselves "children of Abraham". As such, it would be expected that Lazarus considered himself entitled to the group benefit which was that he would be part of God's Kingdom when he came to right the wrongs of his day. Although as a *ptochos*, he may have had doubts; it would be difficult for one who was rejected by society at large to maintain a belief in future inclusion among these same people. So while he may have thought himself part of the social identity "children of Abraham", it is difficult to imagine him actively believing himself entitled to the group entitlements.

## 7.2. Chapter-by-chapter summary

The second chapter gave background information about ancient Mediterranean understandings of socio-economic statuses and personhood. What we learned in this chapter is that ancient Mediterranean personality was not individual but dyadic, and so one's social identity took precedence over one's individual identity. Different groups had different group entitlements, and in-group bias manifested itself in different ways among different groups.

The third chapter discussed parallel parables. In chapter three, we learned that other stories of a similar form to Lazarus and the Rich Man told stories which critiqued social identity as it was related to wealth. Most notably, the story of Micyllus and Megapenthes critiqued the notion that having a social identity as a *tyrannos* did not hold the benefits that Megapenthes believed it to hold and that the social identity of working-class cobbler held more in-group benefits than Micyllus believed it to hold.

The fourth chapter discussed the story's relationship to the Law and the Prophets in terms of social identity. The Rich Man believed his social identity to be in line with the Law and the Prophets and therefore believed that he could expect the group entitlements that came with such an identity. However, characters in the Law and the Prophets, notably Job, did not act like the Rich Man. In the Testament of Job, Job feeds the poor and encourages social relationships between himself and them by allowing them to sit and socialise at his tables. In fact, the Law and the Prophets depicted Ahab, a character who acted in ways similar to the Rich Man, as not having the social identity of one of God's people; he believed that his identity at the top of the social hierarchy allowed him certain in-group privileges afforded to kings which allowed him to take from those beneath him as he pleased, similar to how the Rich Man could have become rich at the expense of land from *ptochoi*. Furthermore, Luke showed the Rich Man to have status illegitimacy; he did not actually hold the social identity that he believed he held (as a member of God's covenant people), as he aligned himself with the interests of those whose social identity put them against God's covenant people.

The fifth chapter discussed Abraham. Here, we learned that, according to Luke's Gospel, not all who claim to be Abraham's descendants are in reality his descendants. The social identity "children of Abraham" was believed to allow one the group entitlement of being part of YHWH's Kingdom, and that being born physically an Israelite allowed one access to such a social identity. Luke shows that this is not the case: "children of Abraham" are revealed by acting in a way similar to Abraham.

## 7.3. Practical application

A practical application of the content of this thesis is avoiding social exclusion due to class differences. In other words, it would be a wise course of action to avoid making class distinctions in our churches. In our churches, we should be quick to include people regardless of social class. Practical ways to do this are to find people who appear to be socially outcast in our churches and try to befriend them.

## 7.4. Concluding remarks about social identity

What Luke is attempting to teach through his parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man is, broadly, that our social identity needs to inclusive of even marginalised groups. We cannot create social identities that leave some people out because of socio-economic concerns. Luke is saying that if our accepted social identities lead us to practice exclusion, we do not actually have access to the social identity "children of Abraham" or the group benefits that come with it.

Those who embrace social identities that lead them to exclude "undesirable" people will not find themselves part of the group "children of Abraham", as evidenced by the fact that Luke uses the Rich Man as an example of one who thought himself safe when he was not actually entitled to the benefits from being part of the group "children of Abraham". Rather, he used his in-group bias to favour only his own groups and those who could raise his honour status by being his clients. His social identity of "rich" led him to be biased against those who did not fit into this identity; it did not allow him to associate with people who were marginalised in his society. According to Luke, Abraham believed that all should have the opportunity to be "children of Abraham". None should be excluded on the basis of socio-economic status.

As Luke continues his writings, he includes Gentiles, thus showing that the fulfilment of God's plan also does not discriminate based on ethnicity. How much more, then, should an Israelite take care of another Israelite? According to Luke, if one practises exclusion, one practises status illegitimacy, as one aligns oneself with the social identity of those opposed to God's covenant people.

Luke is telling his readers, both Jew and Gentile, that, regardless of social status, their social identity should not lead them to exclude another based on social status. According to Luke, God makes

no distinction, and neither should his followers. If one does so, one shows oneself to bear the social identity of those opposed to God, even those who would rule over his land. The rich, according to Luke, must be willing to associate with people from different socio-economic classes regardless of the person's ability to contribute to a higher honour rating through patron-client relationships. Furthermore, since such wealth often came from depriving *ptochoi* of land previously used to feed themselves, the rich need to be careful, as God hears the cry of the exploited. While their culture may tell them that their social identity of "rich" comes with the group entitlement of doing so, this is not the case in God's eyes; none should have their means of making a living taken away from them by force.

In explicitly social-identity-specific terms, Luke is telling us that we should not create social identities that have the group entitlement of the practice of social exclusion. Groups should not, according to Luke, create social identities based on economic terms or social classes that exclude those from different classes. Groups also should not create in-group biases at the expense of other groups.

What Luke ultimately tells us about social identity is that one can voluntarily become a "child of Abraham" and claim this identity and the benefits that it brings. One becomes entitled to the group entitlements. However, this group is not an exclusive group, as it does not bar anyone from entry. Rather than creating social identities that result in a caste system with some classes having more privilege than others, Luke reminds us that we are to live conscious of the fact that the identity "child of Abraham" is one that anyone can claim. We all have the social identity of "human". In Luke's world, there is "child of Abraham" (which is also "in Christ" as Paul would put it) and there are those who are not (which is also "not in Christ"). Anyone, rich or poor, can be a "child of Abraham" or "in Christ". According to Luke, these are the social identities that are important in God's eyes.

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